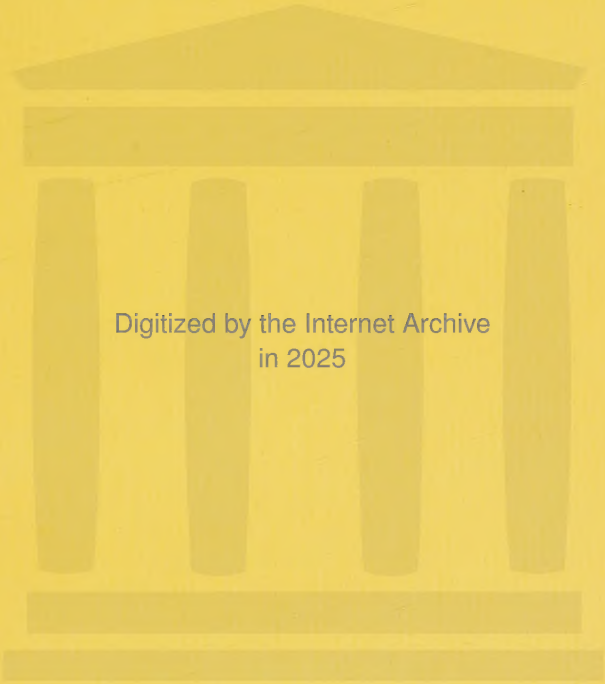


Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/greatcommentaryo0000unse_v8i3

Catholic Standard Library.

THE GREAT COMMENTARY

OF

CORNELIUS À LAPIDE.

A TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH OF

THE GREAT COMMENTARY

UPON THE

HOLY SCRIPTURES

OF

CORNELIUS À LAPIDE.

By the Rev. T. W. MOSSMAN, B.A. (Oxon.), D.D.

Assisted by Various Scholars.

The Four Gospels, in Six Volumes demy 8vo, cloth, price 12s. each, which may be had separately, are now ready.

SS. MATTHEW and MARK'S GOSPELS. Three Vols.

ST. LUKE'S GOSPEL. One Vol.

ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL and THREE EPISTLES. Two Vols.

"A very mine of research and exegetical learning of the rarest kind."—*Standard.*

"It is one of those few 'books which are books,' an unfailing magazine of instruction and devotion of the profoundest views of Holy Scripture and Theology in general, and one of the most valuable and important recently issued from the press."—*Church Review.*

"The translation is good, the sense is rendered truthfully and in good English; the sentences are terse and vigorous."—*Tablet.*

"Mr. Mossman has done his work well, and we wish his enterprise the success it deserves."—*Guardian.*

"Mr. Mossman has done his part as an able and sympathetic scholar might be expected to do it, and the volumes, both in translation and execution, are worthy of their author."—*Saturday Review.*

"We have no hesitation in saying that this is the best and most able Commentary in the English language."—*Revisionist* (Dr. Leary).

"Really the Editor has succeeded in presenting the public with a charming book. When we open his pages we find ourselves listening to voices from all ages of the Church's history, from the pulpits where St. Athanasius and St. Augustin defended the faith against its earliest traducers, from the lecture-halls where St. Thomas and Suarez cast the self-same doctrine into the most rigid scientific form, from the cloister where St. Bernard sweetly nourished the devotion of his monks, and we see how they derive their inspiration from the same Divine source, the Holy Scriptures. It is a book we can sit down and enjoy."—*The Month.*

"It is the most erudite, the richest, and altogether the completest Commentary on the Holy Scriptures that has ever been written; and our best thanks are due to Mr. Mossman for having given us in clear, terse, and vigorous English the invaluable work of the Prince of Scripture Commentators."—*Dublin Review.*

"We set a high store upon this Commentary. There is about it a clearness of thought, a many-sided method of looking at truth, an insight into the deeper meaning, and a fearless devotion to what appears to him to be truth, which lend a peculiar charm to all that he writes."—*Literary World.*

THE GREAT COMMENTARY

OF

CORNELIUS À LAPIDE.

TRANSLATED

BY

THOMAS W. MOSSMAN, B.A.,

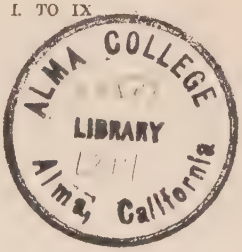
RECTOR OF TORRINGTON, LINCOLNSHIRE,

Assisted by Various Scholars.

כִּי־קִנְאַת בֵּיתְךָ אֲכָלַתְנִי

S. MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.—CHAPS. I. TO IX.

Property of
CLgA
Please return to
raduate Theological
Union Library



Sixth Edition.

JOHN HODGES
HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON
1903

25133

GENERAL PREFACE

CONCERNING

THE EXCELLENCE AND MAJESTY

OF

THE FOUR GOSPELS.

I PROCEED from the Old Testament to the New, from Solomon to Christ, as from a rivulet to a fountain: from Proverbs to Gospels, as from a river to the Ocean of Wisdom. Speaking of the Gospels I would place a crown upon the Scriptures of the New Testament.

The dignity, usefulness, and majesty of Scripture are so great that it surpasses the books of all philosophers and theologians, both Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, as much as Divine surpasses human wisdom. For Scripture is the Word of God. It is the very utterance of God, by means of which God enunciates His wisdom to us, and points out to us the way to virtue, health, and eternal happiness. S. Augustine asserts that "Sacred Scripture is an Encyclopædia of all the sciences. Here is Natural Philosophy, because all the causes of all creatures are in God, the Creator. Here is Moral Philosophy, because a good and honest life is derived from no other source than the love of God and our

neighbour as they ought to be loved. Here is Logic, because Truth and the Light of the rational soul are God. Here is Political Science, for a really flourishing State can neither be founded nor preserved except upon the foundation, and by the bond of faith, and firm concord, when the common good of all is loved: that is to say, when God is loved above all things, and when men love one another in Him, and for His sake." After an interval he adds, "By the Scriptures depraved minds are corrected, little minds are nourished, great minds are delighted. The only minds which are hostile to this doctrine are those which either by going astray know not its healthfulness, or being sick dislike its medicine."

Sacred Scripture is the art of arts, the science of sciences: it is the Pandora of Wisdom. In our own time, S. Theresa, a woman endowed with the spirit of prophecy, and renowned throughout all Spain for the glory of her miracles, and the sanctity of her life, was taught by God that all the troubles of the Church, all the evils in the world, flow from this source, that men do not, by clear and sound knowledge, and serious consideration, penetrate into the verities of Sacred Scripture. See Franciscus Ribera in her Life.

S. Basil (*Hom. in Ps.* 1) says, "Holy Scripture is the universal depository of medicine for the cure of souls. From it every one may select the remedy which is salutary and appropriate for his own disease."

Thus it was that in the age of the martyrs, the Church drew from Holy Scripture courage and fortitude; in the times of the doctors aptitude both to learn and teach, the illumination of wisdom, floods of eloquence; in the ages of heresy, confirmation of faith, whereby errors were plucked up: in prosperity she

learns from Holy Scripture humility and modesty, in adversity greatness of soul. Lastly, if at any time in all the gliding years the Church be deformed by the wrinkles of old age, by spots, or blemishes, it is from the Scriptures she derives correction of morals, and a return to her primitive state of virtue and dignity.

Now, of all the Divine writings, the Gospel is the most excellent, says S. Augustine (*de Consens. Evan.* c. 1). "For that which the Law and the Prophets foretold was to be is shown in the Gospel to be accomplished. Prophecy is the Gospel veiled as the Gospel is prophecy unveiled." Hear S. Ambrose: "It is the Gospel by which the martyr ascends to heaven. The Gospel is the sea in which the Apostles fish: wherein the net is cast to which the kingdom of heaven is like. The Gospel is the sea in which the mysteries of Christ are figured. The Gospel is the sea in which the Hebrews were saved, the Egyptians drowned. The Gospel is the sea, wherein is the plentitude of Divine grace, wherein is the Spouse of Christ, which has been founded upon the seas, as the prophet hath said, 'He hath founded it upon the seas.'"

Christ cries aloud, "I am the Light of the World," for by means of the Light of the Gospel which I spread abroad, I illuminate the whole world. The Gospel, therefore, is the Light of the world, and its Sun. This is why, when it is read, candles are lighted. This was an ancient custom even in the time of Jerome, as he shows in his work against Vigilantius: "In all the Eastern churches when the Gospel is read, lights are kindled, even when the sun is shining, not for the purpose of banishing darkness, but as a mark of joy. Whence also the virgins in the parable always had their lamps burning, that under the figure of corporeal light there might be set forth the light of which we read in the

Psalter, 'Thy word, O Lord, is a light unto my feet, and a lantern unto my paths.'"

This is why there has ever been, not only by the Saints but by all Christians, wonderful reverence paid to the Gospel, wonderful love, wonderful veneration. Constantine the Great sent a book of the Gospels, adorned with gold and precious stones, to S. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra. The Emperor Theodosius wrote the Gospels with his own hand, and was wont to read them a good part of the night. The Œcumenical Councils of Nicæa, Chalcedon, and Ephesus, caused a volume containing the Gospels to be placed in the midst of their house of assembly, that to it, as to the Person of Christ, they might turn, as though Christ Himself were saying to them, "Judge righteous judgment." (S. Cyril, *in Apolog.*) Even the heretics, who have expunged some books of Holy Scripture from the Canon, mutilated and depraved others, have not dared to meddle with the Gospels. Even heathens have respected the Gospels. How high an opinion the Platonists had of them S. Austin relates, *de Civit. Dei*, 10. 29. And in his *Confessions* he says, that in a certain Platonic book he had found the first words of S. John's Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word," but not the sentence, "The Word was made flesh." In fine, the devils tremble at beholding the Book of the Gospels; and S. Chrysostom says, they dare not enter the place in which it is kept. (*Hom.* 31 *in Joan.*)

Christ has wrought many miracles by means of the Gospels. Hear a few out of many. Gregory of Tours relates that when a certain city was in a state of conflagration S. Gall entered the church, and prayed for a long time before the altar. He then rose and took the Book of the Gospels, and placed himself in front of the fire, which was immediately extinguished. Zonaras also,

in his Life of Basil the Macedonian, relates that the Russians were converted by seeing a book of the Gospels preserved uninjured in the flames.

The Holy Gospels claim the surpassing dignity which they hold, as well on account of their subject as because of their Author. Their subject is God Himself, as God and Man. That is to say, the Gospels relate the deeds and the words of Christ the Lord, by means of which He has redeemed us, and taught both what we should believe, and what we should do, that we may arrive at eternal life. Therefore Christ in the Gospels deals with the divine precepts and counsels, with the perfection of Christian life. He speaks of the Sacraments, of faith, hope, and charity, of the Trinity, and indeed of the whole matter with which theology is conversant. You might, with S. Jerome, give this definition of the Gospels: "A Breviary and Compendium of all Theology."

The Author, and as we might call Him, the Choragus in the Evangelical Drama, who is the chief, almost the sole actor and speaker, is Christ the Lord. "God," says the Apostle to the Hebrews, "who at sundry times, and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds." Therefore not Moses, nor prophets, nor kings, but the Only-Begotten One, who from the mind of the Father hath drawn the secrets of the Divine Wisdom, and the very uncreated Wisdom itself, hath made the same known unto us in the Gospels. The very omniscient WORD, I say, here speaks to us with His own mouth, and declares the mysteries kept secret from eternity, though shadowed forth by so many figures in the Law and the Prophets.

This is another way by which the Gospels vindicate for themselves the dignity which is due to them. They have been so formed by the Holy Ghost that those who are simple and unlearned should not be without profit in reading them, whilst great and lofty intellects may discover many things both difficult and obscure in which they may find exercise for their highest powers. "The Divine Word," says S. Gregory (*Prefat. in Job, c.* 4), "exercises by its mysteries those who are prudent; and comforts the simple, for the most part, by what appears on its surface. It has openly wherewith to nourish the little ones: it preserves in secret things whereby it may fill with admiration the minds of the lofty. It is, if I may so say, a river which is both shallow and deep: in which a lamb may wade, and an elephant may swim." For indeed the doctrine of Christ is easy and accessible both to the lowly and the learned: it is only difficult and inaccessible to those who are proud, or slothful, or have confidence in themselves. "I give thanks unto Thee, O Father," saith Christ, "because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, because it hath seemed good in Thy sight."

These and many other such like things you will clearly perceive, if you compare the Law with the Gospel. Under the Law I include the Prophets, and all the other books of the Old Testament: under the Gospel, the rest of the New Testament. The Gospels are, as it were, their base and centre. As the sun shines resplendent in the midst of the planets; and as they borrow their light from him, and circle around him, and move, as I may say, in a kind of choric dance, so is the Gospel refulgent like the sun amongst the writings of the Apostles, and imparts to them its own light and splendour. For what else are

Peter, Paul, James, John, and Jude than preachers and interpreters of the Gospel? "Paul," says S. Jerome (*Epist.* 61, *ad Pammach.*), "is the Gospel trumpet, the roaring of our lion, the flood of Christian eloquence." Thus the Acts of the Apostles set forth Gospel practice; the Epistles of S. Paul and the other Apostles, Gospel doctrine; the Apocalypse, prophecy. For what Christ foretold concerning Elias, Antichrist, the Judgment, and the end of the world, and the signs which shall go before it, John, in the Apocalypse, relates and unfolds more at length. Christ in the Gospel is, as it were, the Supreme Lawgiver, Apostle, Evangelist, and Doctor. He likewise is the Divine Seer and Prophet.

Christ Himself is the true Author of the Gospel. For this very cause He clothed His Godhead with our flesh, that by means of it, He might dictate the Gospel with His own mouth. "For," as S. John says, "The Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." What then is the Gospel? It is the Book of Christ, the Philosophy of Christ, the Theology of Christ; it is the most joyful message of Christ concerning redemption, and the everlasting salvation of the human race, brought by Himself from heaven, and conferred upon believers in Him. For Christ spake far more sublime and divine things by His own mouth than He spake by Moses and the Prophets.

To read, then, or to hear the Gospel, is to read or to hear the very words of the Son of God. And thus the Gospel must be listened to with the self-same reverence as if we were listening to Christ Himself. And this is what we read S. Anthony, S. Basil, S. Francis, and other saints did. "Let us hearken to the Gospel," saith S. Austin, "as to the Lord: the Lord is above, but here, too, is the Lord, the Truth." This is why, when the Gospel is read in church, all stand up, as venerating Christ. This custom

has Apostolic sanction. Hear S. Clement (in book 2 of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, c. 61), "When the Gospel is read, let all the presbyters, deacons, and laity stand up, and keep perfect silence." Isidore of Pelusium shows that the same custom should also be observed by bishops: "When the True Pastor himself approaches, by opening the adorable Gospels, then at last the bishop rises, by this signifying that the Lord Himself is the Prince of the pastoral office, and that God his Master is present." (Lib. 1 *Epist.* 136.) Sozomen condemns the Alexandrine custom, by which, contrary to the general usage of the Church, the bishop does not rise when the Gospels are read. (Lib. 9, c. 39.) Moreover, the Eighth General Council (Act. 10. Can.) decrees that equal honour shall be paid to the Gospels as to the Cross of Christ: "We decree that the sacred image of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of all, shall be reverenced with the same honour as the book of the Holy Gospels. For like as by the words which are contained in the Book all attain to salvation, so by depicting in colours, both wise men as well as the unlearned receive profit from that which is before their eyes. For that which is in syllables are the words of Scripture, and they are preached and commended to us by pictures."

A second reason for the superiority of the Gospel over the Law is found in the surpassing excellence of its doctrine. The doctrine of the Gospel greatly excels that which is found in the Law. The Law declares that one God is to be believed in and worshipped. The Gospel preaches of God, One in Essence, but Three in Person, who is to be loved and worshipped. "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." I allow that in the Law and the Prophets there was a foreshadowing of the mystery of the Trinity. And it

was from thence that Trismegistus drew his oracular saying, "Monad begat Monad, and reflected back his warmth upon Himself." But he neither understood nor penetrated the truth of the mystery. This, too, the Platonists followed after, but they did not attain unto it. They corrupted the truth by an error similar to Arianism, for whilst they proclaimed one chief God, they held that there were lesser and inferior gods. The prophets darkly and obscurely foretell the birth, life, cross, passion, and ascension of Christ, the mission of the Holy Ghost, the calling and conversion of all nations; but the Gospel firmly and clearly announces these things. The foreknowledge, providence, predestination, omnipotence, infinite love of God, and all His other attributes, are openly and distinctly set forth, not by the Law, but by the Gospel. "No one," saith S. John, "hath seen God at any time: the Only-Begotten, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Therefore, when Christ was made man, He descended from the bosom of His Father into the bosom of His Mother, that He might declare unto us the secrets of the Father, which were known to Himself alone. This, in truth, is "the great mystery of godliness," which, as the Apostle says, "was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." This verily is not in the Law, but in the Gospel.

S. Anthony, as Anastasius testifies in his Life, called the Gospel "a Letter of God sent down from heaven," teaching how we ought to journey towards heaven, how we ought to please God, and live a good and perfect life. Excellently saith S. Bernard (*Serm.* 1, *on the Seven Loaves*), "The Gospel is the mirror of truth; it flatters no one, it misleads no one; in it every one will find himself just what he is, so that he need not fear where there is no

cause for fear, nor yet rejoice when he hath done evil." S. Gregory uses the same metaphor (lib. 2 *Mor.* c. 1), "Sacred Scripture is placed before the eyes of the mind, as it were a mirror, that in it we may behold our inward face; in it we can behold our deformity and our beauty; there we discern how we have profited, there how far we have been from profiting." With this S. Ambrose agrees, saying (*Serm.* 20 *in Ps.* 119), "The Gospel not only teaches the faith, it is the school of morals, the mirror of conversation."

Let us admire the sentiment of S. Bernard, who does not hesitate to say (*Serm.* 1 *in Sep.*) that he who hears, reads, meditates upon the word of God with profit, hath a sign and a pledge of his predestination; and, that you may not be astonished, he adds the reason: "He that is of God," saith the Truth, "heareth the words of God. Ye, therefore, hear them because ye are of God." Thus S. Cecilia, the glory of Rome, the princess of virgins, the standard-bearer of the martyrs, always carried the Gospel of Christ in her bosom, which neither flame, nor sword, nor torments were able to wrest from her; but by it she not only won for herself the laurels of virginity and martyrdom, but instructed and prepared her betrothed, Valerian, and her brother, Tiburtius, and many more, for the same laurels; so that deservedly does the Church sing of her, "Thine handmaid, Lord, Cecilia, like unto an industrious bee, doth Thee service."

Lastly, the Law made no Apostles, but the Gospel hath made very many. For "the word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, reaching even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." For the Gospel has this force, that it causes him who believes in it to engage

in propagating it, and so makes him a herald and preacher of it.

S. Chrysanthus, who empurpled Rome by a copious stream of his own and his relations' blood, being converted to Christ from heathenism by reading the Gospel, afterwards converted his wife, Daria; and after that he drew men, and Daria women, without number, to faith and chastity.

S. Boniface, the Apostle of Germany, when he was propagating the faith of Christ in Germany, about the year A.D. 750, always carried about with him the sacred volume of the Gospels. Even in his martyrdom he did not let it go, but when the Frisons brandished their swords above his head he opposed this book as a sort of spiritual shield; and by a remarkable miracle, although the book was cut right in twain by a sharp sword, not a single letter was destroyed. S. Dominic, that illustrious torch of the Church, the Father of the Friars Preachers, had the Gospel of S. Matthew for his constant companion. He knew almost the whole of it by heart, and was wont to say, "Without Holy Scripture a preacher cannot exist." Rightly does S. Gregory, upon those words of Job, "Silver has the beginnings of its own veins," say, "Silver is the brightness of eloquence, or wisdom. The veins of Holy Scripture are as if any one should say plainly, it is necessary that he who prepares himself for the words of true preaching should derive their sources from the sacred pages, that whatsoever he speaks he should recall to the foundation of Divine authority, and make firm the edifice of his discourse upon that." When Ven. Bede was dying, almost with his last breath he would finish his translation of S. John's Gospel, and said to his scribe, "Take your pen, and write quickly." Then when the last words were written, like a dying swan, he sang, "Glory be to the Father

and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," and most calmly breathed out his spirit to enjoy the reward of his faith and labours in the Beatific Vision of God, A.D. 731. The Emperor Charles, truly the Great, both in body and in the glory of sacred literature, as well as for his actions, a little before his death, after the coronation of his son Louis, gave himself up entirely to prayer, almsdeeds, and learning. He himself carefully revised the Four Gospels in conformity with their Greek and Syriac originals. Thus he spent his time until his last conflict. His Book of the Gospels is religiously preserved at Aix-la-Chapelle, as I myself have seen. The heretics have been imitators of these things. It is well known of one, Philip Melancthon, that he never went anywhere, never sat down, nor supped, nor dined, without having the Gospels by his side. But, leaving the sectaries, let us return to the Apostles. S. Barnabas was with S. Paul, the first Apostle of the Gentiles. When he was going forth to convert them he wrote out the Gospel of S. Matthew, and carried it about with him wherever he went. At length, dying a martyr for the Gospel in Cyprus, he desired to be buried with it, as a pledge of the heavenly resurrection promised to him. This very Gospel of S. Matthew was found upon his breast in the time of the Emperor Zeno. See his Life. The Apostle Bartholomew, as Eusebius tells us (*H. E.* v. 10), took with him to the Indies the Gospel of S. Matthew in Hebrew, written with his own hand. There he left it, and more than a hundred years afterwards Pantænus found it, and brought it to Alexandria. What turned Saul into Paul? The Gospel. "These were the men," says S. Leo (*Serm.* 1 *on SS. Peter and Paul*), "by whom the Gospel shone upon thee, O Rome. They delivered to thee, as a charge to keep, that Gospel which Christ had committed unto them: they sealed it with their blood, that thou shouldst

keep it pure, and deliver it, and expound it to all the other Churches as a mistress of truth. This is what Paul proclaims aloud to thee in his Epistle: 'That I may be the minister of Christ to the Gentiles, sanctifying (Gr. ἱερουργοῦντα, that is, consecrating) the Gospel of God, that the oblation of the Gentiles may be accepted and sanctified by the Holy Ghost.'" The Gospel, and the preaching and interpretation of the Gospel, is the sacrifice; the Romans and the Gentiles who believe the Gospel are the victims. These the Apostle offered to God as a most acceptable oblation, when he evangelized them. The blood of Paul was the libation by which this sacrifice was bedewed.

The same S. Paul says in his Epistle to the Ephesians, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ: and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God."

Paul, therefore, was the doctor of angels. S. Chrysostom commenting on the passage says, he taught the principalities and powers the Gospel of Christ. They, therefore, are followers of Paul, and co-workers with him who handle and expound the Gospel, and preach it to countrymen and foreigners, to believers and infidels. These are they whom Isaiah deservedly praises, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things."

It remains that we should apply the doctrines of the Gospel to

our own lives and those of others. For the Gospel is a mirror in which every one may behold his own face. "The Life of Christ," says S. Bernard, "is the rule by which I ought to frame my life." Christ is Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last. "The First," says S. Austin, "in eternity, the Last by humility."

Let us learn then from the Evangel to live evangelically, that is, angelically. For Christ as an Angel descended from heaven that He might teach men angelic life and doctrine, yea, that of men He might make angels, and in a certain sense, gods. "Behold, I," saith He by the Prophet Malachi, "send My Angel, and He shall prepare the way before My face: and the Lord whom ye seek shall straightway come to His temple, even the Angel of the Covenant, whom ye delight in."

Wherefore from Him, who is the Eternal Wisdom of the Father, we must diligently ask light and the grace of His Spirit, that He who sat in the midst of the Doctors when He was about to make a commencement of the Gospel, would even now open it both to teachers and taught, that they may understand it, and fulfil their understanding of it by Christian works.

Let us say therefore again and again with S. Augustine, if not with equal, yet with similar fervour (lib. 4 *de Trinit.* c. 1), "In this sort of men, who have sorrow in their pilgrimage, because they long for the country, and for God the Founder of it, in this family of Thy Christ, O my God, among Thy poor I groan; give me of thy Bread to answer men, who neither hunger nor thirst after justice, but are full and abound. For their own fancy, not Thy Truth hath satisfied them, for they repel Thy Truth and kick against it, that they may fall in their own vanity. Clearly do I perceive how many figments the heart of man brings forth. And what is my heart but the heart of a man? But for this I pray to

the God of my heart that in these writings I may put forth none of those figments for solid truth, but that there may come into them whatever shall be able to come through me from the place whence the dawning of His truth breaks upon me, although I have been cast out of the sight of His eyes, and am striving to return from afar by the path which the Divine Person of His Only-Begotten One hath laid down for mankind."

After a little he adds, "The essence of God is such, that It hath nothing mutable, neither in eternity, nor in truth, nor in will, because there there is eternal truth, and eternal love: and true charity is there, and true eternity; there is loving eternity, and loving truth.

Open unto us, O Lord Jesus, the *arcana* of truth, and of Thine own true love, Thou that hast the key of David, who openest and no man shutteth, and shuttest and no man openeth, that we may know it clearly, and when we know it, may love and cherish it, and loving it, may indeed fulfil it, for Thou art our Love, Thou our Desire our Life, and our Blessedness. Amen.

OF THE NUMBER, ORDER,

AGREEMENT AND DISCREPANCIES

OF

THE GOSPELS.

VERY many in the olden time wrote Gospels, and fathered them upon Apostles, giving them the names of Apostles, that they might in this manner gain a sanction for their heresies. "Thus," says S. Jerome, "these were the authoritative books of divers heresies, published by divers authors, such as the Gospel according to the Egyptians, the Gospel of Thomas, of Matthias, of Bartholomew, of The Twelve Apostles, of Basilides, of Apelles, and others which it would be tedious to enumerate. This only is it needful to say, that certain men rose up, who without the Spirit and grace of God attempted rather to weave a tale than to compile historical truth. To these men may justly be applied the words of the Prophet, 'Woe unto them which prophesy out of their own heart, and walk after their own spirit, who say, The Lord saith, and the Lord hath not sent them.' Of such the Saviour also speaks in the Gospel of S. John, 'All that ever came before Me were thieves and robbers.'" And after an interval he adds, "From all these things combined, it may be clearly seen that four Gospels only ought to be received, and that

all the follies of the Apocryphal Gospels have been the utterances of dead heretics, rather than of Catholic writers."

There are then only Four Canonical Gospels, and the Church proves them to be so by the teaching and tradition of the Apostles. For S. Peter gave his sanction to the Gospel of S. Mark, S. Paul to that of S. Luke, the Apostles unitedly to that of S. Matthew, for when they were about to go away to their several provinces they carried it with them. All the Bishops of Asia, and the rest of the faithful are witnesses to the Gospel of S. John. Origen and S. Jerome, cite the authorities for these statements. As for the Gospel according to the Hebrews, attributed to S. Matthew, although it seems to have been the same with his Gospel, it has been depraved by additions from various sources, so that it is of doubtful and uncertain authority. S. Jerome, however, translated it out of Hebrew into Latin. This is what he says in his catalogue of illustrious men, speaking of James, the Lord's brother: "The Gospel which is called according to the Hebrews, I have lately translated into Greek and Latin. Origen frequently quotes it. It makes the following mention of James after the Lord's Resurrection. 'When the Lord had given a linen cloth to the priest's servant, He went and appeared unto James. For James had sworn that he would not eat bread from the hour in which he had drank of the Lord's chalice, until he beheld Him risen from the dead.' And again, 'Bring forth,' saith the Lord, 'bread and a table,' adding immediately, 'He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave it unto James the Just, and saith unto him, My Brother, eat thy bread, for the Son of Man hath arisen from among them that slept.'"

In the same work, Jerome, speaking of S. Ignatius says,

"Ignatius wrote an Epistle to the Smyrnæans, in which he quotes a passage from the Gospel which has been recently translated by me, upon the Person of Christ, saying, 'I indeed, even after His Resurrection, have seen Him in the flesh, and I believe that He is. And when He came unto Peter, and unto them which were with Peter, He saith unto them, Behold Me, and touch Me, for I am not an incorporeal spirit. And immediately they touched Him, and believed.'" Origen moreover (tom. 2 *in Joan.*) cites from the same Gospel, "Christ hath said, Presently My Mother, the Holy Ghost, received Me, and carried Me by one of My hairs to Mount Tabor." This sentence, unless it be construed favourably, seems to contain the Gnostic heresy of the Valentinians, who asserted that the Holy Ghost was the Mother of Christ.

Origen, however, defends it thus, that the Holy Ghost is not called the Mother of Christ by generation, but by imitation, forasmuch as He imitated His Father, and conformed Himself to His will. This is but a poor defence however. Bede also quotes this Gospel, and asserts that it was allowed by the ancients. But however this may be, it is certain that it is not canonical, and has not the authority of Holy Scripture.

This Gospel according to the Hebrews was also called the Gospel of the Nazarenes, because the Nazarenes made use of it. Hear S. Jerome (*in c.* 12 *Matth. v.* 13), where he is speaking of Christ healing the withered hand: "In the Gospel used by the Nazarenes and the Ebionites, which I have recently translated out of Hebrew into Greek, and which is considered by many an authentic work of Matthew, the man who had the withered hand is said to have been a mason. These are the words in which he cried for help. There was a certain mason who gained his living

by the use of his hands, who cried out unto Him and said, 'I pray Thee, Jesus, that Thou wouldest restore me to soundness, that I may not disgracefully beg my bread.'"

The Nazarenes were Jews who were converted to Christ, who, because they kept the law of Moses together with the Gospel, were cast out of the Church. The Hebrew Gospel of S. Matthew, which they kept at first genuine and untampered with, they seem to have subsequently corrupted by certain additions, in the same way that the Ebionites and Carpocratians did.

You may ask why there are precisely four Evangelists and four Gospels, neither more nor less. 1. S. Augustine (lib. 1 *de Consens. Evang.* c. 2) answers, because there are four quarters of the world in which the Gospel must be preached.

2. "These four are, as it were, the four pillars of the Church, on which as on a square stone, the sacred structure of the faith is built." So says S. Gregory (lib. 1, *Epist.* 24).

3. Because the number four is solid and square. Therefore it denotes the solidity and perfection of the Gospels. Whence Philo (*lib. de Mundi Opificio*) says, "The number *four* first shows the nature of a solid: for a point is reckoned in unity, a line by duality; when breadth is added, superficies pertains to the number three; for surface to become a solid body it lacks one thing; when this is added, namely height, we have the number four." Aristotle calls a perfect man foursquare.

4. Others assign as the reason, that there are just so many letters in the Hebrew name of God, which is called the Tetragrammaton, representing the four primary attributes of God, which are unfolded in the Gospels. Others say, because there were four rivers in Paradise. But these are all mystical and symbolical reasons.

5. The literal and real reason is because, as there are four Cherubim in the court of Heaven, as it were the princes and wise ones of God, so in the Church on earth there are four Evangelists, as it were, princes and cherubim of Christ. This is plain from the first chapter of Ezekiel, where he represents these four Cherubim with four faces, as denoting the four attributes of God. Add that two of the Evangelists, in the beginning of their Gospels, speak of the two natures of Christ—Matthew of His human, John of His divine nature. The other two speak of the two-fold dignity of Christ—Mark of His royal, Luke of His sacerdotal dignity. So Ruperti on the first chapter of Ezekiel. "For Christ was a man by being born, a calf by dying, a lion by rising again, an eagle by ascending," says S. Jerome. That cherubic chariot then is the Gospel chariot, drawn, as it were, by four horses, that is to say, the four Evangelists, making the circuit of the world. This application of Ezekiel's vision of the four Cherubim to signify the four Evangelists is given by SS. Jerome, Athanasius, Austin, Irenæus, Gregory, Ambrose, Bede, and the rest of the Fathers by a unanimous *consensus*.

Listen to S. Jerome (*Epist.* 103, *ad Paulinum*), "Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are the Lord's chariot, the true cherubim, which means *the multitude of knowledge*, whose bodies were all full of eyes, who gave forth sparks, ran to and fro like lightnings, had straight feet, and who were borne aloft; who had their backs covered with wings, and who flew in all directions. They each take hold of one another, they are mutually intertwined, they revolve as a wheel within a wheel, and they proceed whithersoever the breathing of the Holy Spirit leadeth them."

Now, the cherubim of Ezekiel had four faces and four forms, namely, of a lion, a man, a calf, and an eagle. S. John, in the

Apocalypse (chap. iv.), calls them four living creatures. "The first living creature," he says, "was like a lion, the second like a calf, the third was like a man, and the fourth like a flying eagle."

The lion denotes S. Mark, whose face, *i.e.*, the beginning of his Gospel, is the cry and the roar of John the Baptist in the wilderness, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand:" the calf denotes S. Luke, who commences his Gospel with the ancient priesthood, whose victim was a calf. The man denotes S. Matthew, who begins with the human genealogy of Christ. The eagle denotes S. John, who, soaring aloft from earth to heaven, balances himself like an eagle, and thunders forth, as it were, that Divine exordium, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Deservedly does S. Denis the Areopagite, in his Epistle to the same John, call him the sun of the Gospel, and his Gospel itself the memory and the renewal of that Theology, which he drew from the Lord, as he lay upon His breast, and left to be beheld in his Gospel by those who came after, like a ray of the sun.

Listen to S. Jerome in his Preface to S. Matthew: "First of all is Matthew the publican, surnamed Levi, who published a Gospel in Judæa in the Hebrew language, chiefly for the sake of those from among the Jews who had believed in Jesus, but who still observed the shadow of the Old Law, after the truth of the Gospel had come in its place. The second is Mark, the interpreter of the Apostle Peter, and first Bishop of the Church of Alexandria, who had not indeed himself seen the Lord, the Saviour; but related the things which he had heard his master preach, rather according to the truth of what was done, than the order. The third is Luke the Physician, a Syrian by nation, an Antiochene, whose praise is in the Gospel. He was a disciple of

the Apostle Paul; and composed his work in the parts of Achaia and Bœotia. He aimed somewhat loftily; and as he himself confesses in his Preface, narrated what he had heard rather than what he had seen. The last is John, the Apostle and Evangelist, who loved Jesus very greatly, and who, lying upon the Lord's bosom, drank of the very purest streams of doctrine, and who alone was privileged to hear from the Cross, 'Behold thy Mother.'"

These four so appropriately wrote the words and deeds of Christ, that they seem to make a kind of musical harmony of four chords; for what each one writes is different in style from the others, but agrees with them in meaning and in facts. What one is silent about, another supplies: what one gives concisely, another relates more at large: what one obscurely hints at, another gives at length. As S. Augustine says, "Although each seems to have preserved his own order in writing, yet they are not found to have written as though any one were ignorant of what had been said by him who preceded; but as each was inspired, he added the not superfluous co-operation of his own labour."

Lastly, the discrepancies of the Evangelists are the greatest possible testimony to their truthfulness. As S. Chrysostom says in his Preface to S. Matthew, "If altogether and in every respect they exactly corresponded, and with the utmost precision with respect to times and places were in perfect verbal agreement, there is not one of our enemies but would believe, that they were engaged in a common design to deceive, and that they had framed the Gospels by human understanding, for they would not judge that this supposed harmony arose from simple sincerity, but was the result of contrivance." And again, he says, "If any one

whatsoever had related everything, the others would have been superfluous: or if again, on the other hand, each had written nothing which was found in the others, there could have been no proof of their agreement. Wherefore they have written many things in common, and yet each hath related something specially and peculiarly his own. And thus they have escaped the charge of writing for writing's sake, merely to add to the number of the Gospels, as well as the opposite danger of bringing discredit upon everything, by each giving entirely different events."

ON THE VERSIONS

OF THE

GOSPELS.

THE Syriac version of the Gospels was made, as it would seem, from the Greek, and is extant in the royal Bibles. The Arabic version was printed at Rome with a translation, at the Medici printing press, A.D. 1591. I frequently cite both these versions.

I have also found in the Vatican Library at Rome the Coptic, or Egyptian version of the Gospels, the Ethiopian, and the Persian, all very ancient. For the Gospel was brought into Egypt soon after Christ by S. Mark, into Ethiopia by S. Matthew, into Persia by S. Simon and S. Jude. And so the faith of the Gospel flourished in those regions. In them there were swarms of holy monks and brave martyrs. A Persian version was transmitted by Jerome Xavier, the Jesuit, a cousin of S. Francis Xavier, from the city of Arga, in the territory of the King of Mogor, as a precious gift, and a remarkable monument of antiquity, to the Collegium Romanum, where I have collated it. This Codex was transcribed from the original in the Mahometan year 730 of the Hegira, which corresponds to A.D. 1381. The original itself was very much more ancient, for which reason the version contains a great number of Persian words differing from

modern Persian. Of all these versions I propose to make use, though in moderation, and *cum grano*. For they have not the authority of the Greek and Latin Gospels; but they confirm, and to some extent illustrate them. Moreover there are at Rome Ethiopians, or Abyssinians, whose youthful priests are in the habit of coming to the Collegium Romanum. In Rome too there are those who are skilled in other tongues, for the world is in that city. The various Gospels have been interpreted to me by men of the several nations and languages in which they are written, especially by the Reverend Father Athanasius Kincher of our Society, a man well acquainted with the Oriental languages, as may be seen by the Lexicon which he has lately published.

It is said that S. Matthew preached in hither Ethiopia, now called Sennaar, where there are black Ethiopians. He is said to have died in the city of Luah, where there are still standing churches dedicated to him. The rest of Ethiopia, or Abyssinia, attributes its reception of the Gospels and the rest of Holy Scripture, together with the faith of Christ to a certain Ethiopian monk, named Abba Salama, or the father of peace. He was brought up amongst the Eastern Arabs, from whom he derived his knowledge of Christianity and the Holy Scriptures, which he afterwards communicated to the whole of Ethiopia, for which reason he is called its apostle. The Ethiopic version agrees with the Arabic, from which it was derived.

Very many, both in ancient and modern times, have written commentaries on the Gospels. Not to multiply citations, let us quote what S. Jerome says in his preface to S. Matthew: "I confess that I have read many years ago twenty-five volumes of Origen upon S. Matthew, and as many volumes of Homilies. I have read also the commentaries of Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch,

of Hippolytus the Martyr, and of Theodore of Heraclea, of Apollinarius of Laodicæa, and Didymus of Alexandria. Of Latin commentators, I have read the works of Hilary, Victorinus, and Fortunatus, from whom, even though little be taken, something worthy remembrance might be written down."

Of recent commentators the number is all but infinite. Their superabundance makes it difficult for the reader to know which to choose, so that he might say with Niobe of old, "Abundance has made me poor."

For myself, I have written the following commentaries, partly at Louvain, A.D. 1600, partly when I was teaching and lecturing publicly on the Gospels at Rome. I am now an old man, and have passed nearly all my life in learning in the school of the Holy Scriptures. In a science so vast, so sublime and difficult, no one ought to be a teacher and doctor until he has spent long time in studying as a disciple of the doctors.

ON THE TITLE

PREFIXED TO

SAINT MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

THIS Gospel in the Latin, Greek, and Syriac versions, has for its title, "The Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Matthew." That is, this is the book which contains the most excellent and joyful message of the advent of Christ, the Messiah promised to the patriarchs, of His Incarnation, Birth, Life, Preaching, Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension, of the grace of His salvation, and the glory flowing from it and given to the whole world, of which things S. Matthew was the writer, the Holy Ghost the dictator.

The Syriac version prefixes the following title: "In power of the Lord, and of our God, Jescua Christ, we begin to write the book of the most sacred Evangel, the first Gospel, the preaching of Matthew." At the end of the book is written, "Of the holy Gospel, the preaching of Matthew, which he preached in the Hebrew tongue, in the land of Palestine, the end." The Arabic has, "The Gospel of Jesus Christ, as Mar (*i.e.*, *lord*) Matthew, one of His twelve disciples, wrote it."

Holy: The Gospel both is, and is called holy, because all the things which it contains are pre-eminently holy; viz., holy is the Birth of Christ, holy is His doctrine, holy are His works. There

is also an allusion to Daniel ix. 24, where it is said that seventy weeks of years must be fulfilled until Christ, that the Holy of Holies may be anointed, because it is shown in this Gospel that the prophecy of Daniel was fulfilled in Christ which was for to come. For Christ is the Holy of Holies, and therefore as of old to the patriarch Jacob, so now to all Christians, His servants, He will give knowledge of holy things;" for His object is our sanctification, that "we may serve Him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life." (Luke i. 75.)

Gospel, in Greek Evangel, good news, from εὐαγγέλλω, I bring good news. So S. Chrysostom. See Budæus, *in Pandectas*, where he adds that Evangel, by metonyme, signifies a donation, or an offering given for good news. Thus Cicero writes to Atticus, "O, thy sweet letters, for which I confess I owe *evangelia!*" that is, a reward for good tidings. In Hebrew, Gospel is called *besorah*, from *basar*, "flesh," because *besorah* is the most joyful tidings of the WORD "being made flesh."

According to Matthew. The words, *according to*, denote that primarily and chiefly its author is the Holy Spirit, and in the second place S. Matthew. For Matthew was as it were the organ, instrument, and pen of the Holy Spirit, writing the things which the Holy Ghost dictated to him, according to those words in the forty-fifth Psalm, "My tongue is the pen of a ready writer."

2. *According to* denotes that the Gospel is one and the same, but was written in a fourfold manner by four Evangelists. Therefore the words indicate that the Gospel of S. Matthew is not another Gospel than that of SS. Mark, Luke, and John, but only that there was a different writer, and a different manner of writing the Gospel.

3. It signifies that the Holy Ghost accommodated Himself to the nature and disposition of S. Matthew. The Holy Ghost illu-

minated, stirred him up, and directed him, so as to write the things which he had partly witnessed himself, partly had heard from the other Apostles, and partly God had revealed to him, in such a way as should be in accordance with the method, order, style, diction, and genius of S. Matthew. For there was no need of a fresh revelation from God for such things as Matthew already knew, by seeing or hearing them, but only of assistance and direction of the Holy Spirit, lest through forgetfulness, or any other human infirmity, he should err from the truth, even in the very slightest point, or write anything else, or in any different manner from what the Holy Spirit willed.

Some are of opinion that this title was prefixed to his Gospel by S. Matthew himself, as were also the titles of S. Mark, S. Luke, and S. John by those Evangelists. For thus the Prophets prefixed their names to their prophecies, as the Vision of Isaiah, the Vision of Obadiah.

But it is far more probable that the titles of each of the Gospels were attached to them, not by the Evangelists themselves, but by the Church. The similarity of the titles is an indication that such was the case. The title of the Syriac Gospel, which I have already cited, makes it still more probable that it was so. And from hence you may gather an irrefragable argument for the authority of tradition, that Holy Scripture does not suffice for building up the true faith and morals of the Church, but that there is need likewise of Apostolic traditions. This is one of the false negations of the heretics. For tell me if you can, from whence you know that this is the Gospel of S. Matthew, and Canonical Scripture, and that the Gospels of Thomas, of Barnabas, and the Twelve Apostles, which were formerly in circulation, are not Canonical Scripture, except by the tradition and consent of the Church? For many

books have false titles, and are inscribed with the names of other authors, as is plain by the works of SS. Augustine, Jerome, Cyprian, and other Fathers. In the same way some Gospels which were compiled by heretics, were inscribed with the names of SS. Bartholomew, Thomas, and Barnabas. By like art and deceit, they might have ascribed a false Gospel to S. Matthew, as in effect the Gnostics did, when they changed and corrupted S. Matthew's Gospel by their additions. In order, therefore, that we may be sure that this Gospel is rightly ascribed to S. Matthew, and still more, that the whole of it was really dictated by the Holy Ghost, there must needs be the declaration and definition of the Church, which severs it from Apocryphal writings, and pronounces it Canonical. Hence S. Austin, in his book against the Epistle of Manes, which they call *Fundamental*, wisely says, "I would not believe the Gospel, unless the authority of the Catholic Church moved me to do so." Not because the authority of the Church is worthier, or of more weight than that of Holy Scripture —for Scripture is the word and the oracle of God Himself—but because it is the office of the Church to separate genuine Scripture from what is false and spurious, and to give its true sense and meaning. "When, therefore, we say," says a weighty author, "that the Evangelists and other sacred writers have authority from the Catholic Church, according to the sense in which we say it, no one has a right to be offended, as if we set the Church before God. For the sense in which we say that the Church confers authority upon the Scriptures is this, that she declares them to be given by God, and pronounces that they have been dictated by Him. Do they prefer the servant to his master, who say, as is commonly done, that the king's letters have the chancellor's authority, because he has attached the great seal to them?

But the Church has the Seal of God, even the Spirit Himself, who was promised, and has been given to her, that He may abide with her for ever. The Spirit recognizes His own handwriting. He it was who first dictated these four Gospels. And now He makes known to us, by the Church, that He did indite them.

Matthew. Matthew, who was called by Christ from the receipt of custom to the apostolate, was the first who wrote a Gospel. Blessed Peter Damian, in his sermon on S. Matthew, gives him this eulogium:—"Amongst the greatest saints who have gained their titles of victory in celestial glory by their triumph over the world, Matthew seems to me especially glorious and famous, and to obtain a certain primacy of dignity amongst them. To speak plainly, there is no one after Christ to whom, as it appears to me, the holy universal Church is more indebted. For this is the very cause of the life of the world, that the Gospel has shone upon us. Like a captain, he carried a standard for his followers, and by his example stirred them up to write.

Cajetan and the Anabaptists are of opinion that S. Matthew wrote in Greek, because Hebrew words—such as *Emmanuel; Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*—are translated into Greek. But these may have been added by the Greek translator. SS. Jerome and Augustine, Eusebius, and the rest of the ancients, unanimously affirm that Matthew wrote in Hebrew, and that he did so because he was asked by the Jews, when he was going away amongst the Gentiles, to leave them in writing what he had orally preached to them. This is asserted by S. Chrysostom, in his first Homily. The *Auctor Imperfecti* adds, "The cause of S. Matthew's writing was this: at a time of severe persecution in Palestine, when all were in danger of being dispersed, in order that if the disciples were deprived of teachers of the faith, they might not be deprived

of teaching, they asked Matthew to write them a history of all the words and deeds of Christ, that wheresoever they might be, they might have with them a statement of all that they believed. S. Jerome declares that he had seen S. Matthew's Gospel, written in Hebrew, in the Library of Pamphilus the Martyr, at Cæsarea, and from it had transcribed his own copy. This Hebrew text is now, however, lost. For what Sebastian Munster, an unfrocked renegade, has offered to us, as though he had received it from the Jews, is suspected to have been written, or else falsified, by heretics or Jewish traitors, and has besides an offensive odour of spuriousness.

S. Matthew wrote a Gospel in Hebrew, at the bidding of the Apostles, says S. Epiphanius (*Hæres.* 51), in the same year that they took counsel about separating, that they might go to the Gentiles. This was in the year 37 after the birth of Christ, the fourth from the Passion. So that the opinion of Baronius is not so probable that Matthew wrote in A.D. 41. Still less probable is what S. Irenæus says (lib. 3, c. 1), that he wrote whilst SS. Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome. For S. Peter did not come to Rome before the second year of the Emperor Claudius, and S. Paul not before the third year of Nero. Whence it would follow that S. Matthew did not write until the eighteenth or twentieth year after Christ's ascension, which is evidently untrue.

Certainly S. Matthew's Hebrew Gospel was immediately translated into Greek. This was done either by S. Matthew himself, S. John, or S. James, or by some such person. S. Athanasius, in his *Synopsis of Holy Scripture*, says, "Matthew's Gospel was written by Matthew in the Hebrew dialect, published at Jerusalem, and a translation made by James, the Lord's brother." But Theophylact, in his Preface says, "John, it is reported, translated

this Gospel out of Hebrew into Greek." Some again are of opinion that Barnabas was the translator of this Gospel from Hebrew into Greek. Among others this is asserted by Sixtus Senensis. But Anastasius Sinaita says that Luke and Paul were the translators. The Syriac version of S. Matthew was certainly translated not from the Hebrew, but the Greek. S. Jerome also, when by the command of Pope Damasus, he corrected the Latin translation of the four Gospels, made S. Matthew conform to the Greek rather than the Hebrew, as he tells us in his preface to the Gospels. I may observe in passing that when S. Jerome, at the bidding of Damasus, translated the Old Testament out of Hebrew into Latin, he did not translate afresh the New Testament, but brought the existing translation into accordance with the Greek original.

So that the translator of the New Testament was not S. Jerome, but some one much earlier, though far from being a good Latinist, as is plain to every reader.

S. Jerome says, that when S. Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew, he appears to have followed the Hebrew original in his citations from the Old Testament. But the Greek translator has preferred to cite them from the Septuagint, as better known to the Gentiles.

Whether S. Matthew wrote in pure Hebrew, such as that of Moses and the Prophets, or in the corrupt Hebrew current after the Babylonish captivity, usually called Syriac, is not plain. It is certain that the Jews in the time of Christ did not speak pure Hebrew. Syriac was their vernacular. It is very evident that the rest of the New Testament was translated from Greek into Syriac, and the same person apparently translated all the books. The Hebrew words quoted in the Greek text differ from the Syriac words used in the Syriac version now extant.

In S. Matthew xxvii. 8, instead of the Hebrew *Haceldama*, or field of blood, the present Syriac has *agurescadama*, an evident Grecism, partly formed from ἄγρος, a *field*. Instead of the Hebrew *Cephas*, the Syriac has *Kypho*. For *Eli*, *Eli*, my God, my God, it has *Il*, *Il*, omitting the *my*. For *Golgota*, it has *Golgoulto*; for *Jacob*, *Jaacoub*, &c.

The Syrians thought that the translator of the New Testament from Greek into their language was S. Mark the Evangelist. But it is difficult to believe this, for both the Cyrils, Clement of Alexandria, SS. Athanasius and Damascene, Theodoret, S. Ephrem, who lived either in Syria, or else in Egypt, make no mention of it. I may add that the Version has several things which are little pleasing to learned men. This translator appears to have lived subsequently to the Fathers just named. He has this good point about him, however, that he was a Catholic opposed to heretics. For in the headings of his chapters he often makes mention of fasts, vigils, feasts, invocation of saints, &c.

As regards divisions, the Gospel of S. Matthew has been variously divided, and parted into sections. By the ancient Latin Church, according to S. Hilary, it was divided into 33 Canons: by others, it was divided into 67 Canons. By the later Latins it is divided into 28 chapters. By the Greeks, according to Euthymius, it was divided into 68 chapters; according to Suidas into 68 titles, and 355 chapters.

Lastly, S. Matthew is pre-eminent amongst the Evangelists in the following respects:—

1. He was the first who published a Gospel, wherefore Tertullian calls him, "that most faithful exponent of the Gospel." (*Lib. de Carne Christi*, c. 22.)

2. Because he dwells upon Christ's regal dignity more than the others.

3. Because S. Matthew was the Apostle of Ethiopia, and the victim of virginity. He was slain by King Hirtacus, because he was not willing that Iphigenia, the daughter of the King of Ethiopia, who had consecrated her virginity to God, should be given him to wife.

4. Because S. Matthew, who was perfectly conversant with business affairs, for he was over the tribute, was converted to Christ, not by seeing His miracles, not by hearing His preaching, says S. Chrysostom, but by a single word, "Follow Me," obeying this with the utmost promptitude, he was straightway changed into another man, even into an Apostle, so that he left all things, and followed Christ. I may add, that after this he never left Christ, but was a beholder and a witness of His miracles, an imitator of His life, a companion of His journeys and labours a partaker of His cares and griefs, and thus was conversant with Him during the whole period of His earthly ministry.

Matthew means in Hebrew, *given*, as Origen and Isidore say—or a gift, as Pagninus thinks—from *matthan*, a *gift*. Anastasius of Antioch gives a different interpretation, Matthew, he says, means the "command of the Most High." S. Gregory makes the following remarks about him: "Iron is taken out of the earth. Was not Matthew found in the earth, when he was immersed in worldly business, and served the customs' board. But when he was taken out of the earth, he possessed the strength of iron. For by his tongue, and by the dispensation of the Gospel committed to him, the Lord, as by a most sharp sword, transfixed the hearts of unbelievers." Clement of Alexandria says of this Evangelist, that he was not wont to eat flesh, but to live on seeds, berries, and herbs.

I pass over what Abdias (lib. 3 *Hist. Apost.*) says, that Matthew

on account of the Gospel which he was preaching to the Myrmidons, had his eyes put out by those idolaters, but was restored to sight by the Apostle S. Andrew, at the bidding of an angel, who appeared to him, with many other things, for this Abdias is an apocryphal writer. You may consult Surius, Baronius, John de le Haye, and several other writers for further particulars about S. Matthew.

The last thing I will mention is, that S. Matthew made himself known to S. Brigitt, when she was praying at his tomb in the city of Malphi, and said to her, "When I was writing my Gospel, so intense was the heat of the Divine flame which abode with me, that even if I had wished to keep silence, I could not, because of that burning heat."

SAINT MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

CHAPTER I.

1 *The genealogy of Christ from Abraham to Joseph.* 18 *He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary when she was espoused to Joseph.* 19 *The angel satisfieth the misdeeming thoughts of Joseph, and interpreteth the names of Christ.*

THE book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

2 Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;

3 And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram;

4 And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon;

5 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;

6 And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her *that had been the wife* of Urias;

7 And Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa;

8 And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias;

9 And Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias;

10 And Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias;

11 And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon:

12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel;

13 And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor;

14 And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud;

15 And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob;

16 And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon *are* fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ *are* fourteen generations.

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

The book of the generation.—Thus it is verbally in the Greek, Latin, Syrian, Arabic, Egyptian, Persian texts. But the Ethiopian has *the genealogy of Jesus Christ*. Matthew here seems to imitate Moses. Listen to what blessed Peter Damian says in his Sermon on S. Matthew: "As Moses is not improperly placed before the prophets and all who have written anything in the Old Testament, so Matthew rightly takes precedence of all who are found to have written in the New Testament. For as Moses compiled (*texit*) an account of the origin of the world, so has Matthew described the rising newness of the Church, as it were of a spiritual world. Hence it has been provided that, the Holy Spirit guiding the pen, both Moses and S. Matthew placed the same commencement to their respective works, saying, 'The Book of the Generation.'" So far Damian. Now Moses, in Gen. v. 1, thus begins the account of the genealogy and race of Adam, the first formed man—*The Book of the generation of Adam:* for Adam was a type of Christ. For as Adam was the father of the mortal life of all men, so is Christ the Father of the immortal life of the faithful, as S. Paul

teaches, Rom. v. 14, &c., and 1 Cor. xv. 47 et seq. The Hebrew is ספר תולדות *sepher toledoth*, *i.e.*, the book, or catalogue, and enumeration of the generations of Adam. For, in the 5th of Genesis, many, indeed all the generations are given by which the human race was propagated from Adam to Noah and the Flood, whence it is probable that S. Matthew, who alludes to Moses, wrote likewise in Hebrew, in this passage, *sepher toledoth*, *i.e.*, the book of the generations, in the plural. The LXX, however, in Gen. v., have translated *βίβλος γενέσεως*, *the Book of the generation*, in the singular, because the generation of Adam was one, by which he, as it were the patriarch of the whole human race, begat Seth, which generation was afterwards continued by Seth and his posterity, and was propagated as far as Noah. The Greek interpreter of S. Matthew, and the Latin Vulgate, which was translated from the Greek, here followed the LXX, because properly there is related the generation of Christ alone, whose origin indeed is derived from Abraham, through many generations of forefathers, and is brought down to Christ. As, therefore, Adam was the beginning or origin of the old world, so is Christ of the new and better world, whence he is called by Isaiah (ix. 6), "The Father of the coming age." (Vulgate). Hence also Virgil, following the Cumæan Sibyl, sings thus concerning Him, Eclogue iv.:—

> "Now the last age of Cumæan Verses is come,
> Afresh the great cycle of ages begins;
> Returneth the Virgin, Saturnian Kingdoms return:
> The heavenly Offspring descends from on high:"

and adds:—

> "Dear increase of God, true Offspring of Jove,
> Begin, Boy, by smiles thy Mother to know."

It is plain that these things were spoken by the Sibyl concerning Christ; but Virgil, either through ignorance or flattery, has transferred them to Pollio, the son of Asinius Pollio, the Roman Consul.

Note, 1st. *Book* here is the same as catalogue, or enumeration,

or description, whence the Syriac translation, כְּתָבָא, *ketobo*, *i.e.*, a description, or writing. For this is the exact meaning of the Hebrew, *sepher*, to which the Greek *βίβλος* and Latin *liber* correspond. In a like sense, the paper in which was recorded the putting away of a wife by her husband was called a *Book of divorcement*. So the *Book of the righteous* is the catalogue in which the names and acts of the righteous are recorded. *The Book of Life* is the catalogue of the elect, who are written in the mind of God as in a book. Cicero called a catalogue of names, *a book of names*.

Note, 2nd, the word *generation*. First, and most evidently, it is the same as the race, or genealogy of Christ. Second, the generation of Christ is the conception and birth of Christ. See ver. 18. *The birth* (*γέννησις*) *of Jesus Christ was on this wise*. Third, as Maldonatus observes, "the generation of Christ is the life of Christ." For Matthew, in the Gospel, relates the history of the whole course of the life of Christ. Fourth, the Hebrew *toledoth* properly signifies generations, many of which intervened between Adam and Christ. The steps in Jacob's ladder, above which God stood, represented these generations—those steps, I mean, by which the angels ascended from earth to heaven. For as this ladder joined, as it were, earth to heaven, and Jacob to God, so this series of generations united all the patriarchs to Christ, who was made Flesh, and so united all men to Himself and to God.

Son of David, *i.e.*, descendant of David: for the Hebrews call all male lineal descendants, sons. The Evangelist places David first, then Abraham: 1st, because David was the nearer to Christ, and through him Christ reaches to Abraham; 2nd, because thus, in a more compendious manner, without repetition, Christ's genealogy is stated. He wished to impress this fact, that Christ was descended from Abraham through David. So S. Jerome. 3rd, and chiefly, because the promise of God made to David concerning Christ, as about to be born of his posterity, was the later, more special, and more glorious promise, as S. Chrysostom, Theophilus, Euthym., teach. Hence the Jews constantly call their Messiah the Son of David. Hence on Palm Sunday, when Christ

entered into Jerusalem, they hailed Him as Messiah: *Hosanna to the Son of David, i.e.*, O Lord, save our Messiah, speaking of Him as David's son and heir. Lastly, by the title, *Son of David*, the nobility of the race from whence Messiah sprung is hinted at, as also His kingdom, viz., that He too should be a king, as being the Son of David, a king, according to that divine voice of the Archangel Gabriel to the Blessed Virgin, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end." (S. Luke i. 31.) For this reason the prophets everywhere speak of Christ as David's son and heir, thus Is. ix. 7, lv. 3; Jer. xxv. 5; Ez. xxxiv. 23, xxxvii. 25; Amos ix. 11, &c.

The first promise which was made to David concerning Christ, that He should spring from him, and reign for ever, is found 2 Sam. vii. 12; the same was confirmed, Ps. lxxxix. and cxxxii.; and repeated to Solomon, David's Son, 1 Kings ix. 5. When, therefore, S. Matthew says, *Jesus Christ the Son of David*, he means that all these promises were now fulfilled in Christ. Thus S. Chrysostom 2; Theophilus, Euthym.; Irenæus, lib. 8, c. 8; S. Ambrose, lib. 3 *in Luc.*, c. 3; and others.

Son of Abraham. The word Son here may be referred either to David or to Christ. For David, as well as Christ, was a son, *i.e.*, a descendant, of Abraham. It signifies, therefore, that Christ, through David His father, was also the Son of Abraham, who was the father of them that believe, and of the ancient Church. The first express promise concerning Christ was made to him. (Gen. xxii. 18.) Now, from the birth of Abraham to the birth of Christ there were 2,000 years; from the death of David to Christ, 1,013 years. So great was the antiquity of the oracles and promises of God concerning Christ; so constant and sure was God's faithfulness in fulfilling them. And this is why S. Matthew so carefully derives the genealogy of Christ from Abraham, even through forty-two generations, in order that he might show the Jews that Jesus Christ was the true Messiah promised toAbraham,

and that He was the Son of Abraham and the rest of the patriarchs; and that He might therefore, as such, be received, cherished, and worshipped by the Jews.

Ver. 2.—*Abraham begat Isaac.* These two, with those who came after them, were the first patriarchs, the founders of the synagogue and people of God, and of the Kingdom of Christ. They, as types, foreshadowed Him. (See comment on Genesis, where I have unfolded their genealogies.) I will not here repeat what has been said. God constantly calls Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and even makes a boast, so to say, of this title. Wherefore He chose the posterity of Abraham, descending through Isaac and Jacob, for His own family and Church, and gave them the sign and pledge of circumcision. Wherefore God changed Abraham's name from Abram, *i.e.*, a high father, to Abraham, that is to say, אַב רַב הָמוֹן *ab rab hamon*, or the father of a great multitude—viz., of the believing people that should be born of him according to the flesh; in like manner as of Christ, both Jews and Gentiles, who believe in Him, are born according to the Spirit. Now Isaac—*i.e.* laughter—about to be offered up by his father on Mount Moriah, clearly represented Christ, who was crucified on the same mount, and brought salvation and joy to the whole world.

Ver. 3.—*Judah begat Pharez and Zara of Tamar.* (See what I have said on Tamar, Gen. xxxviii. 29.)

Observe that in the genealogy of Christ, with the exception of His Blessed Mother, only four females are made mention of, three of them harlots—Tamar, Rahab, and Bathsheba—and the fourth a Gentile, Ruth the Moabitess. Rahab, too, was a Gentile, being an inhabitant of Jericho. If the reason of all this be asked, SS. Jerome, Chrysostom, Ambrose answer, that it was so because Christ would signify that "He who came for the abolishing and putting away of sins wished to be born of sinners." This reason is true, but allegorical. The literal and simple reason is, that these women were united to their husbands, not in the ordinary way, but after a new and extraordinary manner; and so they

became types of the Church of Christ, which, when the Jews were rejected, was gathered out of the Gentiles by a new vocation, and after a new manner. Tamar, because Shelah was denied her in marriage, or rather because her union with him was deferred, using deceit, prostituted herself to Judah. Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, was united to David, first by adultery, then in marriage. Rahab married Salmon because she hospitably received and protected the Hebrew spies who were sent by Joshua to Jericho, and so she became of the same faith and religion. Ruth married Boaz when she had passed with her mother-in-law, Naomi, from Moab into Judæa.

The tropological sense is to show us the vanity of pride of birth, and that true nobility consists, not in ancestry, but in our own good disposition and virtues. Thus S. Chrysostom. Wherefore let no one be ashamed of his birth, nor even of vile and wicked ancestors; but let us say with Cicero, "I have outshone my forefathers in virtue." There can be no doubt that there are in the ancestry of the most exalted persons, forasmuch as they are sprung from Adam, many ignoble, worthless, wicked, and infamous persons. Plato, according to Seneca (*Epis.* 44), is of opinion that all kings are descended from servants, and that all servants are sprung from kings; that there is no king who has been entirely free from the plough, and no ploughman who has not been mixed up with kings.

Lastly, Solomon, amongst the other vanities and uncertainties of the world, reckons this: "Out of prison one cometh to reign, whereas also he that is born in his kingdom becometh poor." (Eccles. iv. 14.)

Aminadab. He was prince of the tribe of Judah when the Israelites came out of Egypt, who, when the rest stood still, fearing to go into the Red Sea, although God had made dry ground through the midst of it, courageously entered into it, and brought his own tribe safely through, and then the other princes and tribes followed. This is a Hebrew tradition. To this alludes the verse, Cant. vi. 12, "My soul made me like the

chariots of Amminadib." His son Naasson succeeded him in the headship of the tribe.

Jesse, or, according to a different punctuation of the Hebrew, *Isai*. The name itself prefigured Jesus Christ, who was to be born of him. For Jesse and Jesus are the same word if we consider the root of both, which is to be found in the Hebrew יָשַׁע *iasca, i.e.*, to save.

Of her which had been the wife of Urias. After Uriah's death, David married his wife, and of her he begat Solomon, for Solomon was not born of adultery, but in wedlock. In this passage it is intimated that God did not recall the promises which He had made to David on account of his adultery with Bathsheba, but, on their repentance, He confirmed His promises. Whence from Bathsheba and her son Solomon Christ was descended. In truth, Bathsheba herself became a saintly penitent, and brought up Solomon her son in a holy manner. Yea, she became illustrious for the spirit of prophecy, as I have shown in Prov. xxxi. 1, on the words, "The words of Lemuel the king, the vision which his mother taught him." (Vulgate.)

Now Joram begat Ozias—not directly, but with three generations intervening; for Joram was really the father of Ahaziah, Ahaziah of Joash, Joash of Amaziah, Amaziah of Azariah or Uzziah, for he had both names. (See 1 Chron. iii. 12, &c.)

It is asked why S. Matthew here omits these three links in the genealogy. S. Jerome answers, because the Evangelist wished to form three exact series of fourteen generations each, on which see ver. 17. And because Jehoram had allied himself to the most wicked Jezebel and to Ahab, in taking Ahab's sister, the impious Athaliah, to wife; for God had sworn that, on account of Ahab's impiety and idolatry, He would blot out all his posterity. (1 Kings xxi. 21, &c.) Posterity in Scripture is reckoned to the fourth generation. Here, then, it is blotted out, forasmuch as it is omitted and obliterated by S. Matthew. Thus S. Hilary, S. Thomas, Jansen, &c. Gaspar Sanchez gives another reason. He conjectures that Matthew actually wrote as follows: "Joram begat

Ochoziah, Ochoziah begat Joash, Joash begat Amaziah, Amaziah begat Oziah;" but that the copyist, misled by the similarity between Ochoziah and Oziah, as the names are written in Greek, by a slip of his eye passed over from Ahaziah to Uzziah. Thus Gaspar. But this would be an enormous blunder, and though one copyist might fall into such an error, it was scarcely possible that all could. All extant MSS. and Versions are alike here—Greek, Syriac, Latin, Arabic, &c. "*Joram begat Ozias*," *not Ahaziah.* Besides, if these three generations were inserted, they would make seventeen generations, whereas S. Matthew says expressly there were fourteen generations.

Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren. Josias begat four sons. The first was Johanan; the second, Jehoiakim, who is also Eliakim; the third, Jehoahaz, also called Shallum; the fourth, Zedekiah, who is also Mattaniah. Jehoahaz, although the third son, succeeded his father Josiah immediately upon his death; but Pharaoh, King of Egypt, removed him, and placed his brother Jehoiakim upon the throne. After he had reigned eleven years, Nebuchadnezzar slew him, and gave the crown to his son Jehoiachin. Him he shortly afterwards dethroned, and made his uncle Zedekiah king. When Zedekiah rebelled, he took him captive, and put out his eyes; and in him that branch of David's royal line came to an end.

The carrying away to Babylon—Greek ἐπὶ τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλῶνος—that is, about the time of the transmigration to Babylon, or the Babylonish captivity, in which the Jews were carried away by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon.

The transmigration of the Jews to Babylon took place at three different times. The first was in the eleventh year of King Jehoiakim, when Daniel and Ezekiel were carried away. The second was three months afterwards, when Mordecai, Esther's uncle, was carried away, together with Jehoiachin, the son of Jehoiakim. The third, and most complete, captivity was eleven years afterwards, under King Zedekiah, when almost all the people who were left were taken away.

Ver. 12.—*Jeconias begat Salathiel.* There is a great difficulty here, which Porphyry, the enemy of Christ and of Christians, was in the habit of bringing forward as insuperable. For this Jeconias, the father of Salathiel, was not the Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, who is spoken of in the preceding verse, but the son of that Jehoiakim, and the grandson of Josiah, and consequently there are only thirteen generations, instead of fourteen, as S. Matthew enumerates.

S. Jerome replies that this Jeconias is a different person from Jeconias, the son of Josiah. The former was Jehoiakim, or *Jechonias*, and *Jeconias* by a corruption. The latter is properly Jehoiachin. Josiah begat Jehoiakim, and Jehoiakim begat Jehoiachin. One generation must, therefore, be supplied in this place. "*Now Jeconias begat Jechonias*," as some Greek and Latin MSS. do read. That what has been said is correct, is clear from 1 Chron. iii. 15, 16, and 2 Kings xxiii. and xxiv.

The generation in question was omitted, either by S. Matthew himself, in order to avoid the repetition of the two similar names, as S. Augustine thinks, or, more probably, through the fault and ignorance of transcribers, who, mistaking *Jechonias* for *Jeconias*, thought that one of the two was redundant, and so omitted it. This was the opinion of S. Epiphanius.

Ver. 16.—*Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary.* You may ask, why is the generation of Christ here derived from the genealogy of Joseph? Christ was the Son, not of Joseph, but of the Virgin Mary, especially if S. Mary were able, as it might appear, to marry a man of another tribe, as her cousin Elizabeth, who was of the tribe of Judah, like Mary herself, married Zachariah, a priest, and therefore of the tribe of Levi.

The answer is, that Jewish women might, indeed, marry into another tribe: but if they themselves, in the failure of heirs male, became heiresses of their fathers, they were in that case obliged to marry husbands of their own tribe and family, that their inheritance might not pass by marriage into another tribe. (See the last chapter of Numbers, ver. 7.)

Joakim, the father of the Blessed Virgin, had no male children, a fact which S. Matthew here omits, as something perfectly well known in the age in which he writes. Hence it became the duty of S. Mary to marry a husband of her own tribe and family, that is to say, Joseph. Thus the genealogy of Joseph became the genealogy of the Blessed Virgin, and consequently of CHRIST, the LORD. Thus, too, it is, that the Fathers teach universally that Joseph and Mary were of the same tribe and family.

It may be yet further asked, why S. Matthew unfolded the genealogy of Joseph rather than of Mary, since Christ was born of her alone, being a Virgin? I answer:—First, because among the Jews, and other nations, genealogy is customarily reckoned through fathers and husbands, not through mothers and wives. Second, because Joseph was the true and lawful father of Christ, after the manner which I shall explain presently. And Christ was the heir of David's throne and sceptre, not through Mary, but through Joseph, according to God's promise to David, 2 Sam. vii. 12; Ps. lxxxix. and cxxxii. The sceptre, therefore, of Judah devolved upon Jesus Christ, not only by the promise and gift of God, but by the right of hereditary succession. For if, by common right, sons succeed to their fathers' inheritance, when they are only accounted their sons by common repute, how much more was Christ Joseph's, His father's, heir, since He was the Son of his wife, by the power and the gift of the Holy Ghost? Wherefore as Joseph had a parent's right over Christ, indeed, all rights which parents have over sons, so on the other hand, Christ had, with reference to Joseph, all the rights which sons have in respect to their parents. He had therefore a right to the kingdom of Israel after Joseph's death. Hence the question of the Magi (ii. 2), "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" This was what S. Matthew wished to demonstrate, who, as S. Augustine says, insists, most of all the Evangelists, upon the kingship of Christ. And this explains why he gives the genealogy of Joseph, rather than of Mary. For she could not be the heiress of the kingdom, so long as heirs male, like Joseph and others, survived.

Whence also it must be said, as a consequence, that the father and other ancestors of Joseph were first-born, or at least eldest surviving sons of their fathers, so that the right of reigning devolved upon them.

This is what is meant in the first chapter of S. Luke by the words, "And the Lord God will give unto him the throne of his father David." So likewise in Gen. xlix. 10, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come," that is, Christ, who was to restore to Judah the sceptre, iniquitously taken away by Herod; yea, who was to raise their kingdom to a far higher grandeur, by making it spiritual instead of corporeal, heavenly instead of earthly, and, instead of temporal, eternal.

Observe the expression, *Joseph the husband of Mary*. The Arabic has—*the spouse of Mary*. From this we may gather that S. Joseph had all the rights of a real husband with regard to the Virgin, and consequently is rightly and truly called the father of Christ. This is pointed out by S. Augustine.

1. Christ may be said to be the fruit of the marriage of Joseph and Mary, because He was born *in* wedlock, though not *of* wedlock. He may therefore be ascribed either to His father or His mother.

2. Forasmuch as a man and his wife are made one by marriage, as it were but one person in the eye of the law, therefore they have everything in common, and so all their legitimate children: for I except children born of adultery. They have the adulterer as their father, and belong to him.

Christ, then, who was the Son of the Virgin Mother of God, was also the Son of Joseph, who was her husband, and therefore the partner of all her honours and blessings.

Joseph was more truly the father of Christ than one who adopts a son is the father of that son. He is only a father by adoption, but Joseph was father of Christ by marriage. Hence it follows that Joseph had a father's authority over Christ, and therefore the utmost solicitude and affection for him. And Christ

in return cherished, loved, and honoured Joseph as a father, and was obedient to him, as is plain from Luke ii. 51. "This subjection," as Gerson says, "marks at once the unspeakable humility of Christ, and the incomparable dignity of Joseph and Mary."

3. Because Christ properly belonged to the family of Joseph: for He belonged to His mother's family, as His mother herself belonged to Joseph's. There was therefore upon earth one most noble, yea, divine and heavenly family, of which the father and ruler was Joseph; the mother, the Blessed Virgin; the son, Christ. In it were the three most exalted and excellent persons of the whole world; first, Christ, both God and man; secondly, the Virgin Mother of God, most closely united to Christ; and thirdly, Joseph, the father of Christ by marriage.

The common herd of men, yea, many of this world's wise ones, think of Joseph only as a poor and despised carpenter. But the more despised and unknown he was upon earth, so much the greater is his glory in heaven. Wherefore Gregory XV. hath lately decreed that his Festival shall be celebrated as a *Double* by the whole Church on the 19th of March. And this is a well-deserved honour; for consider, from what I am about to subjoin, how great were his prerogatives, his office, and dignity above all other men.

1. Joseph was the husband of the Blessed Virgin, and the father of Christ, as I have already shown. He was therefore the head and superior both of the Virgin, and of Christ as He was man. Hence,

2. There was singular love and reverence, on the part both of the Blessed Virgin and of Christ, towards Joseph. Whence John Gerson, Chancellor of Paris (*Serm. de Nativ. B. V. M.*), exclaims, "O, altogether wonderful is thy exaltation, O Joseph, incomparable thy dignity, that the Mother of God, the Queen of Heaven, the lady of the world, should not disdain to call thee lord!" S. Gregory Nazianzen (*Orat.* 11), denotes and celebrates the excellence of the husband of his sister, Gorgonia, by this one title, that he was Gorgonia's husband. "Do you wish," he says,

"that I should describe the man? He was her husband, and I know of nothing more that I need say." You may say the same of S. Joseph. Do you desire to know who and how great he was? He was the husband of the Mother of God.

3. The ministry and office of Joseph was most noble, in that it pertains to the order of the hypostatic union of the WORD with our flesh. For Joseph exercised all his labours and actions in immediate proximity to the Person of Christ. He nourished, cherished, and guarded Christ, and taught Him his art as a carpenter, according to the common opinion of the Doctors. Hear Franc. Suarez (3 *part. quæst.* 29, *disp.* 8, *sect.* 1):—"There are some offices which pertain directly to the order of grace making grateful, and in this the Apostles hold the highest rank, and therefore need greater assistance of grace than all others. There are, again, other offices which pertain to the order of the hypostatic union, which is *in genere* a higher order, as is plain from the motherhood of God in the Blessed Virgin. And in this order S. Joseph exercised his ministry.

4. Joseph, by his familiar and constant companionship with Christ and the Blessed Virgin, was made a sharer in their divine secrets, and daily beheld and imitated their lofty virtues.

5. Joseph was a person of the utmost sanctity, and endowed by God with singular gifts, both of nature and grace, so that in that age there was no man more holy, or more worthy the betrothal of the Mother of God. Whence Suarez thinks it probable that Joseph was superior to the Apostles and John the Baptist in grace and glory, because his office was more excellent than theirs; for it is more to be the father and governor of Christ than His preacher and forerunner. He adds that when Joseph espoused the Blessed Virgin, he was of mature age, and died before the Crucifixion. This is why in the Passion of Christ no mention is made of Joseph. Lastly, he rose with Christ in common with the rest of the patriarchs, of whom mention is made in Matt. xxvii. 52—"Many bodies of the saints which slept arose." These are the things in which Joseph was pre-eminent.

Of whom was born Jesus. The form of expression is here changed. The Evangelist does not say, *Joseph begat Jesus*, as he had said of Abraham and the rest. Neither does he say, *Mary begat Jesus*, but *of whom was born Jesus.* By this expression he signifies—1. That Jesus was born of Mary, not by natural means, but by supernatural—that is to say, by the operation of the Holy Ghost. 2. That Jesus was not sprung from His father Joseph, but born of His mother alone, she being a virgin, and therefore that Joseph had no other connection with the geneaology of Christ than by right of his wife, the Virgin Mary.

Well does S. Bernard say (*Hom.* 1 *super Missus est*)—"Very beautiful was the mingling of humility and virginity; nor is that soul in only a slight degree pleasing unto God, in which humility commends virginity, and virginity adorns humility; but of what veneration must she be worthy whose fruitfulness exalteth humility, and childbirth consecrates virginity?" And again—"Such a nativity became God, that He should not be born save of a Virgin: such a birth became a Virgin, that she should bring forth only God." It was fitting that, as Christ had a Father in heaven, He should have no father upon earth, but only a mother; for He who was without a mother in heaven (ἀμήτωρ) was without a father on earth (ἀπάτωρ). For it behoved that the Conception and the Birth of Christ should be removed as far as possible from original sin—that as it was not right that He should contract it, so neither should it be possible. And in this He was superior to His mother; for she, although conceived without sin by the singular preservation of God, nevertheless was bound, through that natural conception of herself whereby she was born of Joachim and Anna by natural generation from Adam, to have contracted it, unless it had been prevented by the grace of God. Lastly, it behoved that the Birth of Christ should be most divinely pure, that it might powerfully commend virginity and chastity to us. Whence S. Gregory Nazianzen (*Orat.* 38, *de Nativ. in principio*) says, "Christ was born of a virgin: O ye women, do ye then cherish virginity, that ye may be able to be mothers of

Christ." And Cyril of Jerusalem says, "Christ was born that He might make virgins; much more, therefore, ought a virgin to keep chaste her body."

2. The expression—*Of whom was born Jesus*—signifies that the Virgin was the real mother of Jesus—*i.e.*, of that Man who, being hypostatically united with God, was both God and man. Therefore was she truly the mother of God. For although she was not the mother of Deity, yet did she give birth to God, because she was mother of that Man. For that Man was God, therefore the Blessed Virgin was mother of God.

The reason, *à priori*, is identity of Person, because there is but one Person, and that a Divine Person, in Christ. Hence the attributes of either nature can be predicated of Him; and there becomes a joint participation of the peculiarities of each; so that this Man may be called God, and in return, God may be called Man, the Son of the Virgin, and it can be said that God suffered and was crucified, &c. For one Person is presupposed in these expressions, who gathereth up into Himself all the actions and passions of both natures. Wherefore the Person of the Son of God, who is God, is rightly spoken of as born of the Virgin Mary, but according to His human, not His divine nature.

The surpassing dignity, therefore, of the Blessed Virgin is here indicated: for such is the motherhood of God, that from her He received His own, that is to say, His human substances, such as flesh, bones, blood; and received it in such sort that He cherished, loved, and reverenced her as His mother, and was obedient to her as a mother, and spoke of her as "mother." Whence S. Bernard exclaims in admiration, "A twofold wonder, a twofold miracle; God obeys a woman—humility without a parallel; and a woman is the head of God—dignity beyond compare!"

The Virgin Mother of God possessed the same right and authority over Christ which other mothers have over their own sons. Yea, she had more than other mothers have, because she was more the mother of Christ than other women are mothers of their sons, for a reason which I shall adduce presently.

S. Thomas (1 *part. quæst.* 25, *art.* 6) teaches that God could not perform a greater work than the Incarnation of the WORD, and the maternity of the Blessed Virgin, because she is the very Mother of God—God than whom nothing greater can be imagined. Hence Bede saith, "O most blessed Virgin, in thee alone that rich, yea, more than rich, King emptied Himself." For to be Mother of God is the highest affinity, consanguinity, and union with God. By that motherhood the Blessed Virgin Mary is in as close relationship with God as a mother is with her son.

From this dignity of Mother of God, there follow all the gifts and privileges which have been granted to the Blessed Virgin by God above all men and angels. For as the Humanity of Christ, being united to the WORD, receiveth from the WORD such gifts and privileges as are becoming to such a union—I mean such as may exalt that Humanity, and render It, as it were, worthy of union with the WORD; so, in like manner, God showered upon Mary all the gifts and graces which befitted such a Mother of Christ and Spouse of God. Whence you may draw this conclusion—Mary is the Mother of God, therefore she is far more excellent than all the angels, even the Cherubim and Seraphim. She is the Mother of God, therefore she is Queen and Lady of heaven and earth. She is the Mother of God, therefore whatsoever privilege has been granted to any of the Saints, that she obtains in a more excellent degree.

3. *Of whom was born Jesus*, signifies that He was born of His Mother only, so that she alone contributed to Christ all that flesh and substance which other fathers and mothers are wont to contribute conjointly to their children. For sons derive a portion of their substance from their fathers, a portion from their mothers. Wherefore the Blessed Virgin contributed more to Christ than other mothers are wont to contribute to their sons, because she alone was, in a manner, both father and mother of Christ.

Hence it follows—1. That the Blessed Virgin hath more right in Christ than other mothers have in their sons. 2. That Mary

had far greater love for Christ, and Christ for her, than other mothers have for their sons, and other sons for their mothers, both because she alone bare (*genuit*) Him, as well as because she bare Him not after the natural, but after the supernatural and divine order. So, too, the love which, in other sons, is divided between father and mother, in Christ was united, and applied wholly to His Mother. And thus she felt, as it were, with a duplicated grief the pains of Christ upon the Cross, and experienced a duplicated joy at His Resurrection.

4. The expression, *Of whom was born,* signifies that the Holy Ghost was the most potent and efficient cause of the Nativity of Christ, who, within the Blessed Virgin, of her most pure blood, formed the Body of Christ, organized It, and gave It life, and hypostatically united It to the WORD in the first moment of Its conception. Still the Blessed Virgin was a secondary cause, and a true Mother of Christ for the purpose of generation, not merely as passively furnishing the material, but as actively concurring therein by way of forming, disposing, and organizing that material. See Francis Suarez, 3 *p.*, *q.* 3, 2 *art.*, 4 *ac.*, *q.* 33, *art.* 4, where he teaches that Christ's generation of the Virgin was supernatural, as far as its manner and swiftness were concerned, because, in one moment, it was perfected by the Holy Ghost as the efficient cause. And so the action whereby Mary became a mother was natural; the mode was supernatural.

Was born Jesus. The Word was made Flesh. God became Man. The Son of God was made the Son of the Virgin. This, as S. Thomas teaches at length, was the highest and greatest of all the works of God. At this work the Angels and all the Saints have ever been and are amazed in wonder. For in It God manifested His highest power by uniting man to God, clay* to the WORD, earth to heaven. He manifested also the highest wisdom, that He, who in His Godhead might not suffer to redeem us, put on, in the Virgin's womb, flesh, whereby He might be able to suffer, and to make satisfaction to the Father for our sins. He manifested

* *Limum, lit.* mud, slime.

also the highest justice, because by reason of the dignity of His Person, He makes satisfaction upon equal terms, as it were, to the wrath and justice of God, by suffering death upon the Cross. And He manifested the utmost goodness, because He emptied Himself, that He might replenish us with His gifts. He was made the Son of man that He might make us sons of God, as S. Augustine says. He was born on earth, that man might be born in heaven, as S. Gregory says.

Who is called Christ: that is, who is the Messiah, or the Christ, the Redeemer of the world, promised to the Fathers. And henceforth He can and ought to be called Messiah, or Christ in His own right, and therefore now He is verily so called by all the faithful.

How this genealogy of S. Matthew is reconcilable with that of S. Luke, I will unfold in my commentary on the third chapter of S. Luke.

Therefore, all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, and from David unto the transmigration (the Syriac has *exile) of Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the transmigration of Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.* From Abraham, therefore, unto Christ are forty-two generations. S. Luke (chap. iii.) enumerates seventy-seven generations, but he places no stress upon the number as S. Matthew does. Though S. Augustine, c. 2, *de consensu Evang.*, c. 4., is of opinion that entire remission and abolition of all sins, which is effected through Christ, is denoted by the seventy-seven generations. Whence Christ commanded that forgiveness should be extended to an erring brother seventy times seven. (Matt. xviii. 22.)

By generations, you must understand all the persons, both those begetting and those begotten. These are the fourteen. For the Greek is not γένεσις, *i.e.*, *generation*, properly called, but γενέα, *i.e.*, *offspring, race, family,* and *children, the duration of the life of one man.* For the generations, exactly numbered, are only thirteen in the first Tesseradecade, as you will see if you count the recurrence of the word "begat;" which word is repeated thirteen times; be-

cause in it alone Abraham is reckoned the first, and David the last generation. But in the second Tesseradecade, David, the first in it, is not reckoned; nor yet in the third, Jeconias the first name; because those persons have been already named and enumerated as the last in the second and third Tesseradecades. Therefore, in the third Tesseradecade, one generation must be added—namely, Jehoiakim begat Jehoiachin—in order that it may consist of fourteen generations; that is to say, of fourteen persons begetting and begotten, as I have already said. All the generations then are precisely forty-one; but the persons begetting and begotten are forty-two, because the generation of the first—namely, Abraham—is not reckoned here, but is presupposed as being known from the Book of Genesis.

You may ask, with what object S. Matthew so accurately enumerates these three Tesseradecades of generations? The answer is, because he wishes to pass in review the threefold condition of the Jewish people—the first, the *quasi* democratic state under the several Patriarchs and Judges, such as Othniel, Gideon, Samson, Eli, Samuel, &c., who presided over Israel from Abraham to David; the second, the monarchical, under kings, as David and his descendants, until the captivity; the third, the aristocratic, under dukes and pontiffs, as Judas, Jonathan, Simon, and the rest of the Maccabees, from the Babylonish captivity unto Christ. Matthew signifies that this threefold condition and government of the people was thrice changed, and must be a fourth time changed by Christ, and ended in Christ, who brought in an eternal kingdom. Thus the Fathers and commentators *passim*.

Whence Nazianzen, in his poem on the genealogy of Christ says:—

"Thus he deduced a royal race, and kingly sceptre."

Maldonatus adds a medical analogy. In fevers, and other diseases, physicians call the fourteenth the critical day, and the most perilous. Agreeably, therefore, to the nature of man, after each period of fourteen generations, God seems to have wished to change the condition of His people, that one form of

government, as it were, growing sick and failing, a better one might be born and succeed it, until, through Christ, the best of all should be substituted, which should heal and correct the defects and weakness of the three preceding, and establish the kingdom of the Church, flourishing, sound, and eternal.

Lastly, Matthew enumerates forty-two generations by three Tesseradecades, so as to make it a probable conjecture in the mind of his reader, that it was fitting that Christ should come after this exact number of generations. For as there were fourteen generations before the kingdom of the Jews was established, fourteen during its continuance, after which, during fourteen generations, it evidently declined, so, by a probable conjecture, it might be supposed, that after these last fourteen generations, the kingdom fading away, it was to be restored to a better state by Messiah. For as there were fourteen generations before, and fourteen in the kingdom, so there were as many after the kingdom of Israel until Christ. Again, before the kingdom the promise of Christ was made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; in the kingdom to David and Solomon; after the kingdom the same promise was repeated to Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, &c., that there might be a feeling that all the promises made concerning Christ, both before, during, and after the kingdom were ended and fulfilled in Christ.

Abraham begins, David ends the first Tesseradecade; Solomon begins, Jehoiakim or Jehoiachin ends the second; Jehoiakim or Jehoiachin begins, Christ ends the third. And He is the end of the law, and the deliverer of the captive people and the captive world. So Francisc. Lucas. For the Jews knew from the decline and failure of their commonwealth, and especially when the sceptre was taken away from Judah by Herod, according to the prophecy of Jacob, Genesis xlix. 10, that the Advent of Messiah might certainly be expected. Whence their kingdom being broken up, and this sceptre transferred, S. Matthew here teaches that Messiah was now come, and was none other than Jesus Christ. And thus he would persuade the Jews to believe in Him. *Symbolically*, Origen (*Hom.* 27 *in Num.*), and S. Jerome (*Epist. ad Fabiolam de* 42 *Mansion.*),

remark, that those forty-two generations correspond to the forty-two stations of the Israelites in the wilderness, by which they arrived at the land of Canaan promised to Abraham. Similarly, through the forty-two generations we arrive at the Messiah, or the Christ, promised to the same Abraham, and through Christ, at the land of the living, promised to the saints in heaven.

Again, the number fourteen, because it contains twice seven, by which the sevenfold grace of the Holy Ghost is signified, denotes the gift of the same Holy Spirit in two-fold abundance to man, as it was in Christ, who, indeed, by a like symbol, having suffered on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, when the moon was full, redeemed us by His death, and merited abundance of graces for us. Wherefore the Psalmist sings concerning Him, Ps. lxxii.: "In his days shall the righteous flourish, yea and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth." Listen to S. Ambrose, *Oration on the death of Theodosius:* "In the number fourteen we have received man's perfection; whence the Lord's Passover received the form of its celebration, on the fourteenth day of the moon. Wherefore he who celebrates the Passover ought to be perfect, ought to love the Lord Jesus, who, loving His own people with a perfect love, offered Himself to His Passion. A notable mystery is in the number, since the Father delivered up his only Son for us all, when the moon was shining with a full orb of light. For like this is the Church, which piously celebrates the Passover of our Lord Jesus Christ. It abideth for ever, like the moon at the full. Whosoever shall well celebrate here the Lord's Passover, shall be in light, everlastingly."

Anagogically, the number forty-two is composed of six into seven, For six times seven makes forty-two. The six denotes the labours of this life, whereby we come to the seven, or the sabbath of rest and eternal felicity. For in the six first days of the world God made all things in heaven and earth; but in the seventh day, or the sabbath, He rested from all His work.

Tropologically, by this forty-fold number of generations is signified the life of the body, as compounded of the four elements. For

this life standeth in keeping the ten commandments of God, which are perfected by the four Gospels. For ten into four makes forty. So Salmeron, so even S. Augustine, and from him Peter Bongus, *On the Mysteries of Numbers, Num. XIV.:* "The three divisions," he says, "in the generation of Christ, hint at the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, which is laid down concordantly by the Law and the Gospel. For three signifies faith in the Trinity, four the evangelical doctrine, ten the institution of the Law." The same author adds shortly afterwards: "That the number fourteen should be thrice repeated signifies true religion. For four and ten indicate the New and Old Testament. For the way to Christ is preached through the Ten Commandments of the Law, and the four Gospels; so, however, that we should consecrate whatever is ascribed to the Trinity, that is, to God, because no commandment is fulfilled unless this number is preserved in the worship of God. By the type of this number, moreover, Ezekiel (chap. xl.) beheld in the fourteenth year after the smiting of the city, a new city, even the Church, which Christ, born and dying, founded in the fourteenth generation after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldees, as Cassiodorus remarks (in Ps. xv., *sub finem*). Lastly, in the forty-second year after Christ's Passion, Jerusalem was utterly destroyed by Titus and Vespasian to avenge His death—as S. Jerome observes on the words of the Psalm: "In the next generation let his name be clean put out."

Ver. 18.—*Now the Birth of Christ was in this wise.* The Birth of Christ happened in this manner. For *Birth*, the Greek has not γένεσις, *i.e., generation*, properly so called, but γέννησις, *i.e., rise, conception, generation, nativity*. When any one arises he is conceived, is begotten, is born.

When his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Syriac, "*of the Spirit of holiness*"—that is, the Spirit who is holy, and the Author and Fountain of all holiness.

God willed the Blessed Virgin to be betrothed to Joseph—1. Because Joseph appears to have been the nearest heir of David's

kingdom, that it might devolve from him upon Christ, as from a father to a son, by due order and right of succession, as I have said, ver. 16. 2. Because Joseph was a most holy man, like unto the patriarch Joseph, of whose chastity and virtue he partook, as well as of his name. He was called Joseph—*i.e.*, *increased*—for he was enriched with great gifts and graces from God. Thus S. Bernard, *Hom.* 2 *super Missus est.*

You may ask whether it be here meant that the Blessed Virgin was espoused to Joseph only by betrothal, or by an actual marriage contract and celebration of nuptials; and so, whether Christ was incarnate, and conceived of a virgin who was betrothed only, or of one who was actually married? For to a virgin thus betrothed Gabriel was sent to announce the Incarnation of Christ. (Luke i. 38.) And the Virgin, consenting to his message, and saying, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word," immediately, in that very instant, conceived Christ. Many are of opinion that the Blessed Virgin was only espoused by betrothal, or *per verba de futuro*, by which only a promise of marriage takes place. So S. Hilary, *in loc.*; S. Basil, *Hom. on the Human Generation of Christ;* Origen, *Hom.* 1, *on divers passages of the Gospels.* But others think, with better reason, that the Virgin was espoused not merely by betrothal, but by marriage, *per verba de præsenti*—by an actual nuptial contract. This is proved:—1. Because Joseph is called in the verse following, and in ver. 16, the husband of Mary. This must mean that he had married her. 2. Joseph wished to put her away, as being with child, as it is said in the verse following. He had therefore taken her to him to wife; for no one puts away what he has not. 3. Because "betrothed" (Luke ii. 5) is interpreted to mean married. Yea, Joseph called her his wife. She was therefore already married, and introduced into the house of her husband, Joseph, as his wife, that, by this means, Joseph might be the attesting witness of her virginity, and the guardian and nourisher both of herself and her Child Jesus. Consider, also, that the Blessed Virgin, as soon as she had received Gabriel's message, being now full of the

Word, visited Elizabeth, and abode with her three months. From whence it does not seem that she there celebrated her marriage with Joseph, nor yet after her return to Nazareth, for there exists no trace of such an event. So that she must have celebrated this marriage before Gabriel's message, and the Incarnation of the Word. Neither would it have been becoming that an unmarried virgin should undertake so great a journey into a mountainous country, without a husband, or companion, or without her guardian sending a maid, or some female relation with her. 4. Because it was plainly befitting that Christ should be born of a woman who was actually married, in order that he might not be despised by the Jews as illegitimate, but might be received as a legitimate son. And this is why Joseph is called Christ's father. Finally, offspring is the proper fruit of wedlock. Thus Jerome, Haymo, Chrysostom, Theophylact, Ambrose, Jansenius, Suarez, and others, *passim*.

It may be objected—1. That the angel says to Joseph, "Fear not to take Mary thy wife." Therefore, he had not taken her to wife, but only espoused her by betrothal. I reply—to *take*, here means the same thing as to *keep*, and *retain:* for the angel calls her *his wife*. They were therefore married. The Hebrew verbs often signify not only inchoate, but continuous action. The meaning, therefore, is—"Dismiss not, O Joseph, thy wife Mary, but keep and retain her." For nothing is put away save what has been received and possessed.

2. The Virgin is here called *betrothed*, before they came together, therefore before marriage. In reply, I deny the consequence. To come together does not here signify to contract marriage, nor yet to cohabit, but to make use of marriage already contracted.

3. Why is she here spoken of, not as married, but as espoused? I reply, she is called *espoused* or *betrothed*, because her husband had not known her; and therefore she was *as* a bride, not yet married to her husband, but only promised. So S. Chrysostom. Hence Peter Chrysologus (*Serm.* 175) says, Joseph was a husband in name only, by consent of his spouse; that is, he was accounted her husband by the bond, not the consummation of marriage.

That there was, however, a real marriage between Joseph and the Blessed Virgin is certain from the words of the Gospel, and the common agreement of theologians; and the axiom of lawyers, that—"Consent, not consummation, validates marriage." Whence S. Augustine (lib. 1, *de Nuptiis*, c. 11) says—"The good of marriage was fulfilled in those parents of Christ. There was offspring, fidelity, a sacrament" (for these are the three goods of marriage). We recognize the offspring, the Lord Jesus Himself; the fidelity, for there was no adultery; the sacrament, for there was no divorce." He teaches the same more at large against Julian the Pelagian (lib. 5), who denied the marriage of Joseph and Mary. In chap. 9, he maintains that the *jus matrimonii* is not repugnant to a vow of chastity. By marriage, I possess a right over my wife, but because of my vow, I cannot use that right lawfully. If I do use it, I sin against my vow, not my marriage. That is, I do what is, technically, an irreligious, not an unjust act. For there is not adultery, as it would be, if the wife were joined in marriage. Joseph, therefore, had by matrimony, a power over the Blessed Virgin, but by his purpose, and as it would seem by his vow of chastity, he would not use this power. To have a right or power to do a thing, and to use that power, are wholly different things. The first is necessary for valid matrimony, but not the second.

This right of cohabitation, and *quasi* dominion over a wife, in the case of married virgins, has several true and real, not fictitious consequences. The first is, that a virgin bride cannot marry another husband. The second is, that although the vow be broken by cohabitation, it is not fornication. The third, that offspring divinely granted and born (as Christ in the present instance was conceived of the Holy Ghost) is accounted legitimate as being born in wedlock.

From all this, it may be gathered that the marriage of the Blessed Virgin Mary with Joseph was not only real matrimony, but lawful, yea, holy—*real*, because the essence of wedlock consists in the mutual delivery of power over each other's body, even though this power be never exercised. And a vow of virginity

takes away this power and right from no one, but only renders its exercise unlawful. It is after a similar manner that the *power* is separated from the *use* of a thing, in the case of certain religious, who remain owners of their paternal inheritance, but who, on account of their vow of poverty, are not able to make use of it. It was lawful marriage, because, although the Blessed Virgin had made a vow of virginity, yet she lawfully, and without peril of a breach of her vow, engaged in marriage, because she knew by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, that Joseph would never use his power and marital rights to the detriment of her vow. So S. Augustine, *de S. Virgin.*, c. 4, and theologians, *passim*. It is, moreover, probable that the Blessed Virgin Mary had revealed this, her vow, to Joseph before marriage, and that he had consented to it. Some add, that he had promised to be the guardian of her vow. It was holy marriage, because by means of it Joseph protected the good repute and the virginity of Blessed Mary; and became the guardian, nourisher, and educator of the Child Jesus. What were more holy than this?

See S. Thomas, 3 part 29. 2. 1. *in corpore*, where he assigns many reasons why Christ was born of an espoused virgin. And he adds that there might be a fifth reason why the Mother of the Lord was espoused and a virgin, in order that in her person both virginity and matrimony might be honoured against the heretics, who attack either one or the other. The holy martyr Ignatius, cited by S. Jerome, gives yet another reason—in order that her child-bearing might be concealed from the devil, so that he thought that Christ was not born of a virgin, but of a wife.

Observe here, *tropologically*, in the Blessed Virgin and Joseph the utmost height of angelic purity and virginity. And thus, the Blessed Virgin has communicated this gift of conjugal chastity to several eminent persons, specially devoted to her, as to S. Pulcheria, and Martian, to SS. Julian and Basilissa, to whom, in the first night after their vow of chastity, Christ appeared, accompanied by a vast throng of men in white robes, on the one hand, and the Blessed Virgin, girt about with a virgin throng, on the other hand.

They who were with Christ chanted forth—"Thou hast conquered Julian, thou hast conquered." And they who were with the Blessed Virgin replied—"Blessed art thou, Basilissa, who hast despised earthly marriage, and prepared thyself for eternal glory." Wherefore Julian was the spiritual ancestor of innumerable believers in Christ and martyrs, and Basilissa, by word and example, was the mother of innumerable virgins of Christ.

Also S. Henry I.,or as some say, II., Emperor of Germany led such a life with his wife Cunegundes, of whom, when he was dying, he said to her parents—"Lo! a virgin I received her from you, a virgin I restore her to you." Such, too, were S. Cæcilia, with her spouse Valerian, to whom the Blessed Virgin sent by the hands of angels crowns of roses and lilies.

Symbolically, in this marriage and family union of Joseph with Mary there was an image of the Sacred Trinity. For Joseph represented the Eternal Father, the Blessed Virgin the Holy Ghost, both because she was most holy, and because she had conceived by the Holy Spirit. Christ represented Himself, even the Son of God. Whence, 1. As there is in the Sacred Trinity an essence of Deity in Three Persons, so here was there one marriage and one perfect family, consisting of three persons, namely, Joseph, Mary, and Christ. 2. As in the Holy Trinity the Father spiritually begets the Son, and breathes the Holy Ghost, so here the Blessed Virgin spiritually—not carnally, but by the power of the Holy Ghost—conceived and brought forth Christ. 3. In the Holy Trinity, the Father begets the Son, as light emits light: whence we sing in the Creed, "Light of Light, very God of very God;" so the Blessed Virgin, as the Star of the Sea, brought forth Christ, who is "the Brightness of Eternal Light," and the "Mirror without a spot." (Wisd. vii. 25.) Whence, like as a star, without any diminution of itself, sends forth its rays, so did the Blessed Virgin, without any derogation to herself, bring forth Christ the Light of the world. "Neither do the star's rays diminish its lustre, nor did the Son of the Virgin take away her maiden purity and integrity," says S. Bernard. (*Hom.* 2 *super*

Missus est.) Whence also those words of Simeon concerning Christ, "A Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel."

This family was then, as it were, a heaven upon earth—a family, not so much of three human persons as of three embodied angels—yea, symbolically, as it were, of three Divine Persons. Therefore it is not doubtful that it was thronged with angels, ministering to the Virgin, as Queen of Heaven, and to Christ, as their Lord and their God. Yea, they were amazed, and had the utmost desire to behold the WORD Incarnate. Therefore, that house, as it were heaven, was concealing an admirable mystery. Black without, but fair within, "as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon" (Cant. i. 5), says Rupert. Whence John Gerson (*Sermon on the Nativity*) exclaims in wonder—"O, how delectable to the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, was that house's Trinity, Christ, Mary, Joseph. Nothing dearer, nothing better, nothing on earth more excellent. Heaven envied earth such inhabitants—inhabitants more befitting heaven than earth."

Tropologically, Let husbands and wives imitate the Blessed Virgin and Joseph in purity, in sanctity, in patience, and charity, bearing one another's burdens. There was in this family of Joseph, Mary, and Christ, the utmost concord amongst all, the utmost love, the utmost reverence, humility, piety, help, and mutual compliance. From it, not only all bickering was absent, but even the very lightest suspicion of any evil thing. Hence such a family deserved to have Christ, the Holy of Holies, for its offspring. In our day, there are often in families depraved, disobedient, proud, quarrelsome, impure children, because their parents are such. Like father, like child. What he sees and hears his father and mother do, that he also imitates and imbibes. Children ever ape their parents.

Before they came together. Understand this not as though they afterwards came together for the marital debt, as the impure Helvidius maintained, who denied that the Blessed Virgin was always a virgin, and asserted that she afterwards became by

Joseph the mother of those who, in the Gospel, are called the Lord's brethren. S. Jerome confutes him at length, and shows that nothing is meant here except the miraculous conception of Christ by a pure virgin. Thus we say in common speech, "Such a one had grey hairs before he was an old man," meaning that it was remarkable that he was early grey-headed, even though he never became an old man, but died before he came to old age. Similarly also we say, "His boy was wise before he came to man's estate," meaning that he was of precocious intellect, even though he died before he was of mature age; as those who are precocious do thus often die. Moreover, the brethren of the Lord are called His kinsmen. For, as S. Jerome says (*Cont. Helvid.*), brethren are so called in four ways: by nature, race, relationship, affection. People are brethren by nature, who are born of the same parents, by race, who belong to the same nation, as S. Paul calls the Jews his brethren (Rom. ix. 1), by kinship, as cousins are called brethren in Scripture, by affection, as when Christians love one another with mutual fraternal love. For this is the love of the brotherhood, which S. Paul so often commands.

She was found with child by the Holy Ghost. Observe that Joseph understood by her appearance, that his wife, the Blessed Virgin, had conceived. But whether he knew that she was with child by the Holy Ghost, or not, is doubtful. S. Basil, Origen, Theophylact, and others, hold the affirmative. But the contrary is more probable, because Joseph wished to put her away, but is forbidden by the angel, who removes his scruple, adding, "That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." Therefore, before the revelation of the angel, he did not know this, because had he known it, he would not have wished to put her away.

It is said, therefore, that the Blessed Virgin was found with child of the Holy Ghost, because she had verily conceived by Him. The expression, *by the Holy Ghost*, must be referred to the words *with child*, not to *was found*. So the rest of the Fathers and Interpreters, *passim*. Origen adds that, "She was found by the angels, for they knew that she had conceived by the Holy Ghost."

Of the Holy Ghost. Not as though Christ were framed of the substance of the Holy Spirit, as is the case with other offspring, nor of the Holy Ghost as a father; because Christ, *quà* man, was not like to the Holy Ghost, who in His nature is God; but of the Holy Ghost as an agent and artificer. Thus S. Ambrose, *in Luc.* i. 35. *Of the Holy Ghost*, not, therefore, as of the Father, but, as it were, supplying the concourse of the father. For the Holy Ghost supplied the place of a father to Christ, through His power and operation. So S. Ambrose c. 2, *de Spiritu Sancto*, c. 5, and S. Augustine, *Enchiridion*, c. 39. For the substance of our Lord's body was supplied by the Blessed Virgin, as His only human parent. Strictly speaking, *by* denotes the efficient cause, *of* the material cause—as we say in the Creed: "Conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary."

You may ask—why does not Matthew say also, "With child by the Eternal Father, and by the Son, as well as by the Holy Ghost?" It is replied that he might have said this with equal truth. For it is an axiom among Theologians, that the operations of the Holy Trinity, *ad extra*—that is, with reference to the universe of created things—are common to all the Three Divine Persons. But he preferred to say, "By the Holy Ghost," because, as power is appropriated to the Father, and wisdom to the Son, so love, goodness, and grace, which especially shine forth in this work of the Incarnation, are attributed to the Holy Ghost. For the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son by spiration, being, as it were, the term of the ideal love of the Father and the Son.

Moreover S. Thomas (3 *part*, *quæst.* 32, *art.* 1 *et seq*) teaches that the words "by the Holy Ghost" signify three things: 1. That of the pure love of God and the Holy Spirit, without any human merits, the Incarnation of the Lord was accomplished. 2. Of the same Grace of God and the Holy Spirit, without previous merits, He was conceived. Whence S. Augustine, *c. de Prædest. Sanct.* c. 15, proposes Christ, as it were, the ideal of election and the elect. "Whatsoever man is a Christian, he becomes such

from the beginning of his faith by that self-same grace by which, at the first, Christ was made man: by the same Spirit a Christian is born again, by whom Christ was born; remission of sins is effected in us by the self-same Spirit by whom it was brought about that Christ should have no sin." 3. Christ was holy, by virtue of his conception. For, like as a man, who, by ordinary generation, is propagated from Adam, a sinner, is by virtue of his conception born a sinner, so Christ, who was conceived, and, as it were, propagated by the Holy Ghost, was conceived holy by virtue of his conception. For that which the Holy Ghost worketh can be nothing else save warmth and fire. 4. *By the Holy Ghost*, signifies that He, in the formation of the Humanity of Christ, transposed all His sanctity into It (so far as a creature's capacity would allow of such a thing, and so far as a creature can become like the Creator), and, as it were, transformed It into Himself: so that, next to Himself, He made It to be a pattern and prototype of holiness, that from It and according to It He might, as it were, express and depict all other holiness, both of all angels, and all men. Therefore the Humanity of Christ was the most perfect, special, and most holy work of the Holy Ghost, in which He Himself constituted a fount of all sanctity, which, by its own purity, might wash away the filth of all sins, and, so far as it is concerned, sanctify all sinners.

Moreover, S. Thomas (*quæst.* 32, *art.* 2) teaches that the preposition "by," in the expression *by the Holy Ghost*, signifies that Christ is consubstantial with the Holy Ghost, as touching his Godhead, not as touching his manhood, which He wrought in Christ. This, however, S. Augustine denies.

Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

1. S. Chrysostom (*in loco*), S. Augustine (*Epist.* 52, *ad Macedon.*), Justin M. (*contra Tryphon.*), are of opinion, that Joseph suspected evil of the Blessed Virgin, as though she had conceived by another man. They think that this is hinted at in the expression, *make her a public example*. But we say, far be any such suspicions

concerning a virgin so holy, or a man so just. How, indeed, could Joseph have suspected adultery in such a wife, or uncleanness in her parents' house?

2. Others think that Joseph wished to put away the Blessed Virgin out of extreme reverence, because he thought himself unworthy to have to wife one who was with child by the Holy Ghost. Whence they are also of opinion that S. Joseph accompanied the Blessed Virgin when she visited Elizabeth, and heard her saluted as Mother of God, and therefore thought himself unworthy of her. This is the opinion of Origen, S. Basil, Theophylact, S. Bernard (*Hom.* 2 *super Missus est*). S. Brigit asserts that the same was revealed to her (lib. 7, *Revelat.* c. 25). Whence Salmeron (lib. 3, c. 30) supports the same opinion by thirteen reasons.

But, 3, plainly and surely, Joseph, seeing the Blessed Virgin with child, was astonished at the novelty of the thing, and his mind was agitated by contending and fluctuating emotions, and he reasoned somewhat in this way: "I know that this Virgin is most holy, wherefore I do not believe that she has been false to her troth, plighted to me. Still, she is with child, and I know not by me. But by whom I know not. Can it be by a former husband? Or can she have suffered violence on her journey, when she went to visit Elizabeth? Can she have suffered illusion from some spirit during sleep? Or, what would be more consonant with her sanctity, is she with child by an angel, or by the Deity Himself? Well, however the case may be, I am unwilling to retain her, if an angel, or God Himself, desires to have her. Wherefore I will resign her, and put her away from me."

God permitted this to take place in order that the conception of the Blessed Virgin by the Holy Ghost might be attested unto all, both by Joseph and by the Angel. Thus God permitted S. Thomas to doubt concerning Christ's Resurrection, that he, touching Christ's very wounds, might bear an irrefragable testimony to the same Resurrection.

Joseph, who was a righteous man, teaches husbands and believers not to suspect evil concerning just and holy persons upon slight

grounds, but to wait for proofs. They should not be too ready to *infer* guilt, but should put the most favourable construction they can upon everything.

You may ask, why did not Joseph interrogate the Blessed Virgin, wherefore, and by whom she was with child? I reply, that it is merely the first thought which arose in Joseph's mind, which is referred to, and which, out of modesty, he kept to himself. And he was shortly afterwards anticipated by the Angel, who answered in behalf of the Virgin, and exonerated him by saying that she had conceived by the Holy Ghost.

The Blessed Virgin was unwilling, of her own accord, to make known this divine secret to Joseph, in order that she might not seem to boast of her own gifts, so wonderful and so divine; but she confided all to God, and God's providential care, most certainly trusting that God would defend her good repute and her innocence, and either in His own time open out the whole matter, as she had seen that He had lately done in the case of her cousin Elizabeth, or else would order all things to His own greater glory, and therefore to the greater honour and reverence of this, her conception. From whence, see here and admire the greatness of soul, and the lofty resignation and confidence of the Blessed Virgin in God, whereby she put away from her all this peril and fear of dark suspicion and infamy. And herein she has given a singular example of equanimity and confidence to wives who have jealous husbands, that they, too, should put their trust in God, that God will make clear their innocence and chastity, will protect them, and make them a praise, as he did in this case of the Blessed Virgin. Thus S. Jerome says: "This is the testimony to Mary's purity, that Joseph, knowing her chastity, and wondering at what had happened, hides in silence the mystery of which he was ignorant." And S. Ambrose (*in Luc.* i.) says: "The Lord preferred that some should rather doubt concerning His own generation, than concerning His Mother's purity."

It appears from all this that Joseph did not accompany the Blessed Virgin when she, very shortly after her Conception of

Christ, visited S. Elizabeth. For if he had been in her company, and had seen and heard the great and wonderful things which befell her, they would have removed all his scruples, and he would not have thought of putting her away. And especially when S. Elizabeth said to the Blessed Virgin: "Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" He would have known from thence, that not only had she conceived of God, but that she had conceived God Himself, and that she was carrying Him in her womb.

Observe that Joseph is here called *just*—that is, a man of probity—forasmuch as he was one who wished, out of charity, to consult for the good fame, yea, even for the dignity of his spouse, when he thinks of putting away privily one whom he thought himself unworthy of. S. Jerome and Theophylact think that husbands were commanded by the old law to traduce and accuse before the judges their wives, if they were guilty of adultery. But they adduce no place in which such a precept is given. For the passage in Num. v. 2 only permits such a thing to be done, but does not order it.

To make her a public example. Not, to send her away to her own house, as Abul. thinks. For the Greek is, παραδειγμάτισαι—that is, to *disgrace*, to *defame*, or, as S. Augustine (*Epist.* 59, *ad Paulinum*) says, rendering literally, "*to make an example of.*" It was the custom in Crete to lead adulteresses through the midst of the streets, as they did captives at Rome, that they might be gazed at and derided. Whence that ancient punishment by law against bawds: "Let bawds and adulterers be caned through the public streets of the city, that they may be reviled and derided." And the line of Propertius: "Not even if the infamous one should traverse the whole city."

Was minded to put her away privily. By the way of secret divorce, giving her privily a bill of divorcement, as Abul. says on the passage, *quæst.* 39; or rather, and in a more honourable way for her, by leaving her on the plea of travel, as going away into a far country. So Maldonatus. Whence the Syriac translates:

"*And he thought of leaving her secretly:*" and the Arabic, "*Since he did not wish to put her to public shame, he thought upon a private dismissal.*"

But while he thought on these things. He had evidently not resolved upon them. For this was his first thought, and, as it were, the first motive of his mind. *Behold the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.*

Conceived: that is at one and the same time, *conceived, formed,* and *animated,* for this is the proper meaning of γεννηθέν—that is, *begotten, born.* See Abul., *quæst.* 52, and S. Thomas, 3 *part. quæst.* 33 & 34, where he teaches that the Body of Christ was in the very instant of its Conception, as regarded all its members, 1, perfectly formed and organized by the Holy Ghost; 2, animated with a reasonable soul; 3, assumed by the WORD. 4. That the soul of Christ was filled with all wisdom, and the grace of that Headship which flows from thence into all the members—*i.e.*, to all the faithful. 5. That the same soul saw God through the Beatific Vision. 6. That the same had the use of reason, even apart from the Beatific Vision, by means of infused knowledge, and that, in this way, It knew that It was hypostatically united to the WORD, and therefore gave God highest thanks because of this vision and exaltation: and that God revealed to the soul of Christ His own will, concerning His death upon the Cross, that He might thereby redeem and save mankind; and that the soul of Christ forthwith accepted this, and offered himself to God as a whole burnt-offering, a victim for sin for the salvation of the world, with the utmost humility, obedience, reverence, love, exultation, and joyfulness of mind, saying—"Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, that I should do Thy will. Yea, O my God, I am content to do it: Thy law is written in my heart." (Ps. xxxix. 8, and Heb. x. 7.)

She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins, If Jesus, as follows from this,

is Emmanuel, that is, God with us; if He is the offspring and the Son of Blessed Mary, as is here said, then she is not only Mother of Christ but Mother of God, as defined by the Council of Ephesus against Nestorius. For Mother and Son are relative terms. Moreover, Valentinus is condemned by this passage, who taught that Christ brought down a celestial body from heaven, and passed through the Blessed Virgin as through a conduit-pipe. But she who bears a son is really the mother of the son; and furnishes, and indeed provides his body and all his limbs.

Jesus, that is, Saviour. This was Christ's proper name, here foretold by the Angel, but given Him at circumcision, a name which signifies and represents His office and dignity—yea, compendiously His whole life.

Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet saying, Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. The Syriac is: *And they shall call his name Amanuil*, which is explained, *Our God with us.* The Persian has, *Immanuil*, that is, because God dwelleth in us. The Egyptian version—*And they shall give him the name Emmanuel*, the interpretation of which is, *for God is with us.* S. Matthew to the reader, or, as some think, the Angel to Joseph, here brings forward the prophecy in Isa. vii. 14, to signify that it was now being fulfilled in this Conception of the Blessed Virgin, his wife, and would be perfectly fulfilled when she brought forth. And therefore he called Joseph the son of David, because the same thing was promised by God to David. I have fully expounded this prophecy in my commentary on Isa. vii., which see.

Behold. A word exacting attention, consideration, and admiration. As it were, "Behold, O ye angels, and all mankind, see and admire a new and wonderful thing, a thing unheard of in all ages. For a virgin shall conceive and bring forth Emmanuel, that is, God made man." Whence Jeremiah, overcome with astonishment at the same event, exclaims (xxxi. 22), "The Lord has created a new thing upon the earth: a woman shall compass a man."

Cyrus, the first king of Persia, according to the testimony of Xenophon, never admired, and taught his friends to admire nothing on earth. For this is the mark of a great and a regal mind, to despise all things as being beneath him, as being of less importance than himself. And Seneca said that a wise man admired nothing, because, being above the earth, he despised all things lower than himself. But in Divine matters all things are worthy of admiration; because they are great, yea, the greatest things, especially the mystery of Emmanuel, because it is the great mystery of Divine Godliness, as the Apostle says, 1 Tim. iii. 10. Therefore, the goodness of the great God is a thing to be astonished at and admired. "Who through the bowels of his mercy visited us, the day-spring from on high." "Behold, therefore, the infant WORD, the wise Child, the God-Man," says S. Bernard. Theologians and contemplative writers teach that we can consider and meditate upon this mystery in various ways, as by the method of compassion, of joy, of thanksgiving, of love, of imitation, but most loftily by wonder, as though we were always stumbling, amazed and astounded at this so great condescension of our God, whereby He deigned to descend to us worms of the earth so as to become a worm with us; and this, not for His own sake, but for ours, that He might unite men as worms to Himself, and make them gods. Thus the Blessed Virgin was amazed, and thus, too, S. Paul, S. Bernard, and Francis, and other especially saintly persons, who plainly and entirely despised the world, and all the things which are in the world, as being petty, brief, and transitory, and fixed their whole love, thought, and amazement on the WORD Incarnate, and had their conversation always with Jesus, despising all other things.

Emmanuel. The Syriac has *Amman Elohan—i.e.*, our God with us; but the word *our* is not in the Hebrew Emmanuel. From the Syriac it appears possible that S. Matthew, if he wrote in Syriac (as, many think, because the Jews for whom he was writing, in the time of Christ spoke in Syriac), interpreted the Hebrew *Emmanuel* by the Syriac *Emman Eloha*, or God with us. Munster, and

others who have translated the Gospel of S. Matthew out of Latin into Hebrew, render the single Hebrew word Emmanuel by two, *Immanu Elohim*.

Some think that this interpretation was made by the Greek translator, who was followed by the Latin. The French shorten Emmanuel into Noel, which they duplicate and sing at Christmas-tide. Now, the name Emmanuel signifies the Incarnation of the Word, and His whole Economy in the Flesh, because by It He was properly and physically God with us, by means of His flesh and His conversation, and ethically by reconciliation and grace. So S. Chrysostom.

You may say: How is the name Jesus the same as Emmanuel, as S. Matthew here intimates? Tertullian (*lib. contra Judæos*) answers that it is the same in sense if not in sound. For that God should be with us is the same thing as that a Saviour—*i.e.*, Jesus—should be with us. For none other than God could be our Saviour.

Observe the Hebraism by which *called* is put for *be*. *He shall be called Emmanuel*, that is, *He shall be Emmanuel*. This is by the figure of speech metonymy, to which the following passages are clearly similar: Jer. xxiii. 6, Zech. viii. 3, and Is. ix. 6—"And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of peace." For all these things are signified, either explicitly or implicitly by the name of Jesus.

Note, also, that Christ is not called by Matthew and Isaiah *Emmanu Jehovah*, or *Emmanu Adonai* or *Elohim*, though all these are names of God, because Jehovah connotes the essence of God, or signifies God as He is the first, chief, and uncircumscribable Entity, from whom all other entities derive their existence. *Adonai* connotes the dominion of God, and signifies God as He is the Ruler, the Judge, and the Avenger of all things. But *El* connotes the might and omnipotence of God, and signifies God as He is strong and omnipotent, because God manifested His utmost might and power in the Incarnation, and in Christ, for through Christ He hath vanquished His strongest enemies, even the devils,

hell, death, and sin, yea, and all sins and vices, however many and however great. Whence, also, the Angel who announced this mystery, was called Gabriel—*i. e.*, the *strength of God.*

Hence, also, tropologically, observe: God is with us, not only in essence, presence, and power, as He is in all and every creature; but by the Incarnation He is also with us truly, properly, and really, as a Brother, living, speaking with us in the human nature assumed by Him. Therefore—2, He is with us, as a Head with its members. For Christ, as the Head of the faithful, causes to flow into them spiritual sense and motion, together with direction and government. 3. The Same, being Incarnate, is with us in the Eucharist, as it were our Food, feeding us with his own Flesh, and giving us to drink of His own Blood. So far, physically. 4. Christ, ethically, is with the Church as a bridegroom with a bride, assisting, protecting, sustaining, adorning, making her fruitful. Whence the Psalmist: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." (Ps. xxiii. 4.) Therefore the believer, in every difficulty, labour, or tribulation, invokes Emmanuel, that is, God with us, conversant in our flesh. And joyfully he cries, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall lack nothing. He shall lead me in a green pasture, and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort." And, Ps. xxvii. 1, "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom, then, shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom, then, shall I be afraid? Though an host of men encamp against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid; and though there rise up war against me, yet will I put my trust in him." And with Paul, "If God be for us, aye, with us, who shall be against us?" So now, to any believer, but especially to a saint or a martyr, it is lawful to say what the Angel said to Gideon, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." (Judges vi. 22.)

Then Joseph being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: that is, did not put her away, but retained her with him, for this was what the Angel commanded him.

And knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son: and he called his name Jesus.

1. S. Hilary, *in loc.*, cited by S. Thomas *in Catena*, Dionys. Carthus., and Gagneius expound as follows: As the Jews were not able to look upon and recognize the face of Moses on account of the rays of light which God had, as it were, breathed into him when He talked with him on Mount Sinai, so neither was Joseph able to look upon and to know the Blessed Virgin, forasmuch as she had God in her womb, and therefore her face was most radiant. But after Christ was born, this glory and effulgence left her face, and then she could be seen and known by Joseph.

2. On the contrary S. Epiphanius, *Hæresi* 30—that is, his treatise against the Ebionites—expounds thus: Joseph knew her not in mind. He did not discover the sanctity and the dignity of the Blessed Virgin, his wife, until she brought forth Christ. But these expositions are either incorrect or else symbolical and mystical.

3. According, therefore, to the true literal meaning, to know one's wife signifies in Scripture the conjugal act. This, therefore, is excluded with reference to Christ, so as to signify that He was not conceived of Joseph, but by the Holy Ghost.

Until. From hence the heretics have taken occasion to say that Joseph knew her after she had brought forth her Son. Whence they deny that the Blessed Virgin always remained a Virgin, and that after bearing her Child she lost her virginity. Thus Helvidius, Jovinian, the Ebionites, and the rest of the Antidicomariani, who are confuted by S. Epiphanius, S. Jerome, S. Augustine and others, who teach that the word *until*, in this place, only signifies what took place up to the time of the birth, not what happened after the birth, which is not here referred to. For by this word *until*, Matthew wished to assert a wonderful thing—a thing hitherto unheard of, and, according to nature, incredible—even the Conception of Christ, without a father, by a virgin mother. Similarly, *until* is used, Ps. cx. 2., "Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool," not because Thou shalt not after that sit any longer, but because Thou shalt then sit far more gloriously,

as victor and triumphant at my right hand. And in Matthew v. 26, "Thou shalt not come out thence until thou hast paid the uttermost farthing;" that is, thou shalt never come out from the fire of hell. And 2 Sam. vi. 23, "And Michal, the daughter of Saul, had no child unto the day of her death," *i.e.*, never. And, Gen. viii. 8, concerning the raven, which Noah sent forth out of the ark: "It returned not until the waters were dried up;" *i.e.*, it never returned. Thus, too, we say, "S. Agnes continued a virgin until death;" *i.e.*, she always remained a virgin, for she could not lose her virginity after she was dead.

You may urge, S. Matthew says, *until she brought forth her first-born son;* therefore she had other sons, by Joseph, namely those who in the Gospel are called the Lord's brethren. I reply by denying the conclusion. For, in Scripture, any one is called a first-born son, who has no elder brothers, even though he be an only son. This is plain from Exod. iv. 22, and xiii. 2. The word "first" denies the existence of any previous sons, but does not require, or presuppose, that there were any subsequent. Thus, an only son is even now called the first-born.

Therefore it is a doctrine of the faith that the Blessed Virgin always remained a virgin, as is plain from S. Luke i. 34, Ezek. xliv. 2, and by the universal consent of the Fathers, and the common consent, and perpetual tradition of the Church. (See S. Jerome, *contra Helvid.*, init. tom. 2.)

CHAPTER II.

1 The Wise Men coming to Christ, 11 worship him.
14 Joseph fleeth into Egypt.

NOW when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

3 When Herod the king had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judæa: for thus it is written by the prophet,

6 And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

8 And he sent them to Bethlehem; and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found *him*, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

9 When they had heard the king, they departed: and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

13 And when they were departed, behold the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child, and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word ; for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

14 When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt,

15 And was there until the death of Herod ; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my Son.

16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth ; and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.

17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,

18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping *for* her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

19 But when Herod was dead, behold an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

20 Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel, for they are dead which sought the young child's life.

21 And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.

22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judæa in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither : notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee :

23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth : that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king. It is better to read here in the Greek *in Bethlehem-Juda.* Juda means the tribe of Judah, to which, after the schism of the ten tribes, who made a king of their own, Jeroboam, the tribe of Benjamin adhered. And these two formed the kingdom of Judah. S. Matthew adds the word Judah to distinguish the town from another Bethlehem, in the tribe of Zebulon, in Galilee. (See Josh. xix. 15.) So S. Jerome.

This was Herod I., the son of Antipater, surnamed the Great, and of Ascalon, and an Idumæan by race, whom the Roman Senate, on the recommendation of Antony, created the first king of Judæa, after its conquest. (See Josephus, lib. 14, *Ant.* c. 18.)

Matthew makes mention of Herod, to intimate that the sceptre was now transferred, from Judah to an alien, for such was Herod.

and therefore that Messiah or Christ was now come. For the patriarch Jacob had foretold that this should be the sign of His advent. (Gen. xlix. 10.) So S. Chrysostom, and Theophylact. Herod, being aware of this prophecy, applied the oracle to himself in order to strengthen his kingdom. He wished to be accounted the Messiah; and therefore he built a most magnificent temple for the Jews, and dedicated it on the anniversary of the day when he commenced his reign. (See Josephus, lib. 15, *Ant.* c. 14, and lib. 20, c. 8.)

Herod Antipas, who beheaded John the Baptist, was the son of this Herod the Great. He also it was who clothed our Lord in His Passion with a white robe, and mocked Him. And the grandson of Herod the Great, by his son Aristobulus, was Herod Agrippa, who killed James the brother of John, and who was smitten by an angel and died. And the son of this Agrippa was Herod Agrippa the younger, before whom Paul the prisoner pleaded. (Acts xxv. 23, &c.)

Salianus, Scaliger, and others, think that Christ was born in the thirty-sixth, or last year but one, of Herod's reign. For he reigned thirty-six years. (See on ver. 16.) But Baronius thinks that Christ was born in the twentieth year of Herod, Abul. in the thirtieth, Bede in the thirty-first, Eusebius in the thirty-second, Sulpitius Severus in the thirty-third, Torinellus in the thirty-fourth, and others give other dates, so that in a matter of such uncertainty nothing can be exactly determined.

Behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? Wise men, Gr. *Magi*, a common word among the Persians, whence the Persian translation of S. Matthew has here *Magusan*, *Magi*, or *wise men*, or *astrologers*, or *philosophers*. The word seems to be derived from the Hebrew as Genebrard, on Ps. i., thinks, from the root *haga* to *meditate*, whence *Magim*, those who meditate. "For meditation is the key of wisdom," as Ptolemy says in the proœmium of Almagestus. Hence those who are given to meditation either are, or else become, wise. The Chaldees, following the Hebrews, were ac-

customed to call their philosophers Magi, according to S. Jerome *in Dan.* c. 2. Hence the Arabians, Syrians, Persians, Ethiopians, and other Orientals, whose languages are either derived from, or akin to Hebrew, call their wise men and astrologers, Magi, according to Pliny, lib. 25. c. 2, and Tertull., *contra Judæos.*

Came to Jerusalem. 1. Because they thought that the King of the Jews must be sought for in the royal city; so S. Leo says. 2. Because the chief priests, and scribes, and doctors of the law, were at Jerusalem, who, from the prophetic oracles, would be likely to know where and when Christ should be born, as in fact they did inform the wise men that He should be born at Bethlehem. For prudently the Magi, although they had the star, wished to consult also the living interpreters of God's will. And thus it was that the star for a time withdrew itself, as though to compel the wise men to approach the Scribes. For it is God's will that men should be taught by men, and by doctors appointed by Himself, the way of salvation.

From the east, Gr. ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν, *i.e.*, *from eastern parts*, as though these Magi came from several regions or provinces of the east.

You ask from what country the Magi came?

1. Clemens Alex., S. Chrysostom, Cyril Alex., and S. Leo, cited by Baronius, think that they came from Persia. But the distance would seem too great. For Persia is 300 leagues from Judæa, which the Magi would scarcely traverse in thirteen days. It is true that with dromedaries, which can travel forty leagues in a a day, the journey might be accomplished post-haste in that time; but those kings, with their luxuries and their litters, were not travellers post-haste, and could not perform the distance in any such time. And the more common opinion of the Fathers and Doctors is that the Magi came to Bethlehem on the thirteenth day from the first appearance of the star and the birth of Christ, and there adored Him, and that this is the force of the word *lo!* Also because they found Christ still remaining with His parents, among strangers at Bethlehem, and they, a little after, returned with Christ to their own city, Nazareth. This is the opinion of

S. Augustine, *Serm.* 1, 2, 3, *de Epiphan.*, and S. Leo, *de eadem.* Whence also the Church commemorates this mystery on the thirteenth day after Christmas.

2. Others with more probability think that the Magi were Chaldæans, both because the Chaldæans were addicted to astrology; and these Magi recognized Christ by the teaching of a star, and because they themselves were followers of Abraham, who was called by God out of Chaldæa into Judæa. So think S. Jerome, Chalcidius the Platonic, and Jansenius.

3. Abul. (*in Numb.* c. 24), and the Jesuit Sebast. Barradi, think that the Magi were Mesopotamians, because Balaam, who predicted this star was from thence.

4. Navarrus (*Tractat. de Orat.* c. 21) asserts that he received from Jerome Osorius, Bishop of Algarbii, and a celebrated writer, that it is found in the very ancient records of Calecut, that the king of Calecut was one of the Magi, or certainly a chief associate (*socium*) of the three wise men. It is credible that this may have afterwards been the case when the Magi preached with S. Thomas the Apostle, in that place. See Osorius, lib. 1, on the actions of Emmanuel, king of Portugal, where he asserts from Indian traditions that the king of Cranganore, which is not very far from Calecut, was one of the Magi: for that the two other Magi, the Persian, and the Caramanian, as they were hastening to Christ with the star for their guide, associated with themselves this Indian king; and that hence he was called Chereperimale, or one of three. He adds that he was nearly black, and like an Ethiopian. Maffei has a similar account, lib. 2, *Hist. Ind.*, where he calls this prince Pirimal, and asserts that he was king of Calanum, and that the star was his guide to Christ by the admonition of the Indian Sibyl.

5. And most probably, these Magi were eastern Arabians. Whence Tacitus (lib. 5, *Histor.*) says that Judæa was bounded by Arabia on the east.

This is proved, 1. Because it was the opinion of S. Justin, Tertullian, Cyprian, Epiphanius, and others, whom Baronius cites. 2.

Because this answers best to the prophecy of Isaiah, who foretells (lx. 6) that the Sabeans, Midian, and Ephah, who are all Arabians, should come to Christ with presents. And it would appear that the Church has thus understood Isaiah's prophecy, since she so frequently recites it in the office for the Epiphany. This is likewise plainly in accordance with the Psalmist: "The kings of Tharsis and of the isles shall give presents, the kings of Arabia and Saba shall bring gifts." (Ps. lxxii. 10.) 3. Because Arabia is nearer to Judæa than Chaldæa, India, Persia, &c. 4. Because the Queen of Sheba was a type of these kings. And she came with similar presents from Arabia to Solomon, a type of Christ. And although this queen be said to have come from Ethiopia, yet this Ethiopia was not Abyssinia, but a part of Arabia. For she came from eastern, not western Ethiopia, as S. Anselm says. Arabia includes the Red Sea and the adjacent regions, especially the neighbouring part of eastern Ethiopia. So the Madianites are called Ethiopians because of their black, or dark, colour. Whence Moses' wife is called an Ethiopian woman. (Numb. xii.) Also the Red Sea is called the Arabian, not the Ethiopian Gulf, because Arabia stretches itself even beyond it. Hence again it is probable that one or more of the Magi were black, both because this is the universal opinion, as painters thus depict the Adoration of the Wise Men, and because the Queen of Sheba is said to come from Ethiopia: "And the Ethiopians shall fall down before him." (Ps. lxxii. 9, Vulg.) And the Magi are called "kings of Tharsis, *i.e.*, of the Red Sea." 5. It is plain, from the gifts which the Magi offered to Christ: Arabia abounds in gold, frankincense, and myrrh. This is why it is called Felix, the Happy. "Nowhere is frankincense," says Pliny, "except in Arabia." And Virgil, "The frankincense tree belongs to the Sabeans alone;" and (2 *Geor.*), "India sends ivory, the unwarlike Sabeans their frankincense." In this Arabia there is also abundance of myrrh and spices, so that they use none other than such wood for kindling fires. (Pliny, lib. 12, c. 17.) In the same country there is so great a quantity of gold that their furniture is

resplendent with it; and in Saba of Ethiopia even the prisoners' chains are made of it. (See Mela, lib. 3, c. 10.) 6. Because the prophecy of Balaam, concerning the star of these wise men, was uttered in the land of Moab, which was a part of Arabia. See S. Jerome, *in Locis Hebraicis*. See also Pineda, lib. 5, *de rebus Salomonis*, who shows that the Queen of Sheba came to Solomon, and the three Magi to Christ, from Saba, in Arabia Felix, a district inhabited by the Homeritæ, amongst whom the Christian religion afterwards marvellously flourished under Ely Gaan, who received it from the kings, his ancestors, who were probably these Magi.

The common opinion of the faithful is that these Magi were kings, that is, petty kings, or princes. And this belief, let Calvin laugh as he may, is fully handed down by SS. Cyprian, Basil, Chrysostom, Jerome, Hilary, by Tertullian, Isidore, Bede, Idacius, who are all cited by Maldonatus and Baronius. S. Matthew, however, does not call them kings, but Magi, because it was the part of these last to recognize Christ by the star. Hence also in Ps. lxxii., they are called "kings of Tharsis," and "kings of Arabia and Saba." Again, that they were three in number, from the three species of gifts which they offered—gold, frankincense, and myrrh,—is taught by Augustine, *Serm.* 29 & 33, *de Tempore*. The pious tradition of the faithful favours the same opinion. And the office of the Church for the Epiphany implies it.

The author of the imperfect work upon S. Matthew in S. Chrysostom asserts that after the resurrection of Christ, S. Thomas the Apostle came to the country of these Magi, and baptized them, and associated them with him in preaching the Gospel.

Venerable Bede, to whom we may well give credit, in his *Collectanea*, not far from the beginning, names and describes them as follows:—The first is said to have been called Melchior, an old man, grey-headed, with flowing beard and locks; he presented gold to the Lord the King. The second was Gaspar, young, beardless, and ruddy; he with frankincense, as an oblation worthy of God, honoured God. The third was Fuscus; he had a full

beard, and by means of myrrh signified that the Son of Man should die.

Lastly, some say that these Magi, as they preached Christ, were slain by the idolaters, and gained the crown of martyrdom; and offered themselves, as it were, an holocaust of gold and frankincense and myrrh to Christ. Amongst these, L. Dexter, in his Chronicle, under A.D. 70, says: "In Arabia Felix, in the city of Sessania, took place the martyrdom of the three Royal Magi, Gaspar, Balthazar, Melchior." From Sessania their sacred remains were translated to Constantinople, from thence to Milan, and from Milan to Cologne, where they still remain, and are greatly venerated, and where I myself have often honoured them.

Who is born King of the Jews. Observe here the faith and greatness of soul of the Magi, who in a royal city seek another King rather than the reigning monarch; nor fear the wrath and power of Herod, because they trusted in God.

The King of the Jews, put antonomastically for Messiah, or Christ. Wherefore when Herod heard this question, he gathered the Scribes together, and asked them where Christ should be born? For the star was the index of Christ; whence it is subjoined, "For we have seen His star." This is what is meant—"The King of the Jews, yea, of heaven, has been born; for a star of the heavens has made Him known to us. It has called us: it has invited all to visit Him, to honour and adore Him. For in this new star which has been put forth in heaven, heaven manifests her admiration of so great a King, even the Word incarnate." When Christ is born, the heaven is astonished, the angels are amazed, and, wondering at the love of God for man, they sing with jubilation, "Glory to God in the highest," that so they may arouse senseless man to wonder at and venerate so great condescension. So from a like cause, at the passion of Christ, the sun and the moon were darkened, the earth quaked, rocks were rent, graves were opened, to show that their God was dying, and to manifest their sympathy. This is what Haggai foretold (ii. 7)—"Yet a little while, and I will shake the heaven and the earth:

and the Desire of all nations shall come." At this also Habakkuk was amazed when he said (iii. 2), "I considered thy works, and was afraid. In the midst of the two living creatures thou shalt be known" (LXX)—that is to say, in the manger, by the shepherds and the Magi. Wherefore Francis Mayro, in a sermon on the Nativity, teaches that the incarnation of the Word was a greater and more stupendous work of God than the creation of the world. For man is more distant from God than he is from nothing. For man is finite, God is infinite, and, by the incarnation, God is united to man; but, in creation, man is united to nothing—that is, to a body created out of nothing.

Lastly, from this star, that impostor who, a little after Christ, under the Emperor Adrian, feigned himself to be Messiah, gave himself a name. He excited the Jews to rebel against the Romans, and became their leader, calling himself Barchochebas, *i.e.*, the Son of the Star, saying "that he, for their salvation, had glided down from heaven, as a great star, to bring the help of light to diseased mortals, who were condemned to long darkness." Thus Eusebius, *Hist.* 4. 6. But this star soon set, for he and all his followers were cut off by the Romans.

Appropriately did a star lead the three royal Magi to Christ, the King of kings, for a star has the appearance of a kingly crown, with its resplendent rays; and therefore a star is an emblem of a king and a kingdom. Whence God promises to Abraham (Gen. xv. 5), saying, "Number the stars of heaven, for so shall thy seed be." Here, amongst other things, He designated the kings of Israel and Judah, who should spring from Abraham, but especially Christ the King. Hence, unfolding the same thing, God says to Abraham explicitly, "Kings shall come out of thee." (Gen. xvii. 6.) Wherefore S. Fulgentius (*Serm. on the Epiph.* 5) says—"Who is that King of the Jews? At once poor and rich, lowly and exalted, who is carried as a babe, and worshipped as a God: a babe in a manger, incomprehensible in heaven, sordid in rags, priceless among the stars."

Hence has been taken that ancient military order of the kings

and princes of France, who bore the figure of a star on their vestments, with this motto—"The stars show the way to the kings." This order was afterwards changed, by Louis XI. of France, into the Order of S. Michael. The Order of the Star was first instituted by Robert of France, about A.D. 1022 (in honour of the Blessed Virgin, to whom that monarch was greatly devoted), because she is the very Star of the sea, imploring that she, like a guiding-star, might be the leader of his kingdom, and especially of the nobles. Wherefore he elected thirty knights of the chief nobility of France to be of this Order, and gave to each a golden collar, with a star pendant on the breast. (See the "Annals of Paris," by Jacob Broneius.)

For we have seen his star—namely, of the King of the Jews, *i.e.*, Christ, or the Messiah, newly born. From hence it would appear that this star extended its rays with greater length and brightness in the direction of Judæa, in the same manner that comets extend their tails towards such and such a country; so that the Magi might understand that they were to go in the direction of Judæa, where Messiah was to be born. This seems to be the force of the word *for* in this place. Wisely does S. Gregory say (*Hom.* 10)—"All the elements testified that their Creator was come. The heavens acknowledged Him to be God, and so they sent the star. The sea knew Him, for it suffered Him to walk upon it. The earth knew Him, for, when He died, it trembled. The sun knew Him, for he hid his rays. The rocks and stones knew Him, for they were rent asunder. Hell knew Him, for it gave up the dead that were in it. And yet Him, whom all the senseless elements felt to be the Lord, the hearts of the unbelieving Jews even yet acknowledge not by any means to be God, and, harder than the flint-stones, they will not be broken by repentance."

You will ask how the Magi, when they saw the star, knew by it that Christ was born?

In the first place, the Priscillianists, as S. Gregory (*Hom.* 10) testifies, said that this star was the Fate of Christ; that as fate determines things future, so this star signified and determined

Christ. But this opinion S. Gregory rightly refutes, saying, "It was not the Child who hasted to the star, but the star to the Child. So may it be said, that the star was not the fate of the Child, but the fate of the star was the Child who appeared." S. Augustine also (lib. 5, *de Civitat. Dei*, c. 1, &c.) confutes the astrologers, who say that the stars assign their fates to every one.

[There follows here a refutation of astrological views, which is not translated, as unnecessary in the present age.—*Trans.*]

A second opinion is that of the Imperfect Author. This star, he says, was distinguished by the figure of a boy bearing a cross, because the light of faith manifested the Incarnation and Cross of Christ. But this is said without foundation. It is not related in any history, except that of the Sethiani, of whom presently.

I say, therefore, that the Magi knew Christ was born by the token of a star. 1. Because Balaam had prophesied of it (Numb. xxiv. 17), "A Star shall rise out of Jacob." But the Magi were the posterity, or successors of Balaam. The meaning therefore of "Where is he who is born King of the Jews? *for* we have seen his star," is, we seek Him whom we all have hitherto expected to be designated by a star; and now, since we have seen the star, we believe that He has been born. There is, moreover, this oracle of the Erythræan Sibyl extant (lib. 8, *Sibyll. orac.*): "The Magi worshipped the Star, recent and divine; and when they followed the commands of God, an infant was shown to them in a manger."

That the Magi knew that this star was the harbinger of Christ from Balaam and the Sibyl, is the opinion of S. Basil, S. Jerome, Origen, S. Leo, Eusebius, Prosper, S. Cyprian, Procopius, and others, whom I have cited on Numb. xxiv. 17. Whence Suetonius, *in Vespas.*, and Cicero, lib. 2, *de Divinat.*, and Orosius, lib. 6, c. 6, say that it was then a general belief that a King would come forth from Judæa who would have universal dominion. This the heathen falsely applied to Vespasian. Chalcidius, who was a heathen and Platonic philosopher, commenting upon the *Timæus* of Plato, thus writes: "There is another very sacred and vener-

able history," meaning the Gospel of S. Matthew, "which tells of the rising of a certain star, not one denouncing disease and death, but declaring the descent of a God to be worshipped, for the sake of converse with man and mortal concerns. When certain wise Chaldæans, in a journey by night, had seen this star, and had well considered the circumstance, they are said to have searched for the God newly born, and, when they had found the august Child, they worshipped Him, and presented gifts suitable for so great a Deity." The author of the *Imperfect Homily*, upon this passage of S. Matthew, adds that the successors of Balaam, after his prophecy concerning the star, deputed some persons, in each generation, to watch the heavens, who might observe the rising of this star, on the mountain which is called Victorialis; and at length, when these Magi were watching for its appearance, "it came," he says, "upon that mountain Victorialis, descending, as it were, in the form of a little child, and upon him the likeness of a cross. And it spoke with them and taught them, and told them to go into Judæa. And as they went, the star went before them for the space of two years. And they wanted neither food nor drink. But the rest of all the things which were done by them is compendiously related in the Gospel." These things, however, are of doubtful credit, and are taken from the apocryphal books of the Sethiani, as the writer acknowledges.

2. More probably, they knew by a divine instinct and revelation; for the Magi were endowed with a hidden celestial *afflatus*. "This they heard," says S. Augustine (*Serm.* 2 *de Epiph.*), "telling them in the language of heaven, as it were, that Christ was born in Judæa. Thus they followed the star on to Bethlehem and the cradle of Christ." For, as S. Leo says (*Serm.* 4 *de Epiph.*), "God, who manifested the sign of the star, gave understanding to those who beheld it: for He made it to be understood and inquired after, and, being sought after, He presented Himself to be found."

The brightness and majesty of the star were so great that the Magi understood that something divine was portended, even that God, as the Holy Spirit suggested to them, had become incarnate

In fine, the Divine countenance of the Child Christ shed forth such a ray of heavenly light as illuminated the eyes, but still more the minds, of the Magi, so that they perceived that that Infant was not a mere man, but true God; for, as S. Jerome says, on the ninth chapter of Matthew, "The splendour and the majesty of the hidden Divinity, which shone even in His human face, were able at the first glance to attract those who beheld Him."

You will ask, secondly, of what kind, and how great was this star? Was it of the same nature as the rest of the stars, or was it peculiar and diverse from others? First, the writer concerning the marvels of Scripture (lib. 3, c. 40, as extant in tom. 3 of *S. Augustine's Works*), thinks that this star was the Holy Ghost, who, like unto a dove, descended upon Christ, and, by means of a star, guided the Magi. 2. Origen, Theophylact, S. Chrysostom, and Maldonatus think that this star was an angel, because, indeed, an angel was the mover, and, as it were, the charioteer of the star. 3. Others think that it was a real and new star, similar to the one which appeared in the Constellation of Cassiopeia, A.D. 1572. 4. Others think that it was a comet. But I reply that it was a new and unknown star, entirely different from other stars, and superior to them in nine prerogatives, and, as one may say, portents. It was formed by the angels for this purpose, that it might lead the Magi to admire it, that they might feel assured that it presaged something new and divine.

1. This star surpassed all others as to its creation or production. For they were produced in the fourth day of the Creation, but this was produced upon the very night of Christ's nativity. It was therefore a new star, and was never seen either before or after this time. So S. Augustine, lib. 2, *contra Faustum*, c. 5.

2. In its material: for in other stars this is celestial, but in this it was aerial. For the angels framed it of condensed air, and infused brightness into it.

3. In place: for other stars are in the firmament; this was in the atmosphere. It went before the Magi in their journey from Arabia to Judæa.

4. In motion: other stars move in circles; but this went straight forward. For it moved in a direct line from east to west.

5. In time: other stars only shine by night; for the sun's light obscures them during the day. But this was as bright by day, during the shining of the sun, as it was by night.

6. In duration: for other stars always shine; this was temporary, for it continued only during the period of the wise men's journey, and afterwards vanished.

7. In size: for the other stars are greater than the earth and the moon, but this was less than either. This, however, appeared greater because it was nearer the earth; just as the moon appears larger than the fixed stars, because it is nearer to us, although it is in reality far less.

8. In being inconstant: for this star sometimes hid itself, as at Jerusalem; at other times it was visible, and a guide of their journey. When the Magi went forward, it went forward; when they rested, it rested. At length it stood over the house where the Child was. And then, as though its work were accomplished in Christ's Epiphany, it vanished. The other stars have no such property.

9. In splendour: in which it surpassed all the other stars. Whence S. Ignatius, who lived a little after Christ, in his *Epistle to the Ephesians*, writes thus: "The star shone so as to surpass in brightness all that were before it. For its light was indescribable; and struck with amazement all who beheld it. For all the rest of the stars, together with the sun and moon, were a kind of chorus of audience for that star, for it surpassed them all in splendour.' Prudentius in his hymn for the Epiphany says, "That star which surpasses the sun's orb in beauty and radiance." S. Chrysostom says the same thing. Whence S. Leo (*Serm.* 1 *de Epiph.*) says, "A new star appeared in the eastern parts to the three Magi. It was brighter and more beautiful than all the other stars. It attracted to it the eye and the mind of those who beheld it, so that it was immediately perceived that this strange sight was not without a purpose."

This star was a new meteor formed by the angels from the atmosphere, and filled with an immense light, and moved by an angel, like the pillar of fire and cloud, which guided the Hebrews through the desert to the promised land. So S. Chrysostom, Fulgentius, Basil, and others. Indeed, that pillar was a type of this star. Truly does S. Chrysostom say (*Hom.* 16 *ex variis in Matth. loc.*) "Thou, O star, by thy advent calledst the Magi from the east, and sentest them back to preach the gospel in their own land."

Furthermore, in the books passing under the name of Seth, the son of Adam, there are various things related of the Magi, and of the star in the figure of a child carrying a cross, &c., which seem to have been fabricated by the Sethianist heretics. (See Epiphanius, *Hæres.* 26 & 39.)

Also Gregory of Tours, says Haymo, relates, that this star fell into a well, where it may be even now seen, but only by virgins; and that once three men came to behold it, and that only one of them, who was a virgin, could see it. But such things, says S. Anselm, are fables and trifles.

Allegorically, Christ is "the bright and morning star," (Apoc. xxii. 16.) Whence S. Ambrose saith, "Christ is the star: for a Star shall rise out of Jacob, and a man come forth of Israel." (Vulg.) In fine, where Christ is, there is the star. For He is the bright and morning star: therefore doth He make Himself known by His own light.

Again, the star of the sea, that is, of this storm-tossed world, who shows us thereby the way, and goes before us to the harbour of safety, is the Blessed Virgin, whence her name Mary. The Hebrew Mariam means teacher, or mistress, or guide of the sea. "Behold the star, invoke Mary," says S. Bernard. Hence, also, the Church invokes her, saying, "Hail, star of the sea, bounteous Mother of God."

Tropologically, the star is, 1. The faith of a believer. 2. Prudence. 3. Precepts. 4. Evangelical counsels, especially obedience to a superior. 5. Holy inspirations infused into the

mind by God, whereby He calls the soul to some action, in a more perfect state, as, for example, virginity, or martyrdom. God, let us say, calls thee to sanctity and heroic virtue, to a state of perfection; He shows thee a star to go before thee on the road to heaven. Gaze then upon it, follow it, lest this star of a divine vocation, being seen of thee, be depised, and in the day of judgment accuse and condemn thee before God. "There is nothing, therefore, too difficult for the humble," says S. Leo (*Serm.* 5 *de Epiph.*), "nothing too rugged for the meek, and all things can be accomplished, when grace furnishes her assistance, and obedience lightens the command."

Hear S. Gregory (*Hom.* 39 *in Evang.*): "Behold God calls us by Himself, by the angels, by fathers, by prophets, by apostles, by pastors. He calls us also by our own selves, by miracles, very often by chastisements. He calls us by worldly prosperity, and sometimes by adversity. Let no one despise the call, lest the time should ever come, when they will wish to answer and not be able."

Anagogically, doctors and whoever instruct many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever. (Dan. xii. 3; and Apoc. ii. 28.) Wherefore S. Leo says, "Whosoever shall live a godly life in the Church, and shall seek those things which are above, not which are upon the earth, is like a heavenly luminary. And whilst he himself preserves the brightness of a holy conversation, he, like a star, shows to many the way of the Lord. In such a course ye all ought, well-beloved, to profit one another, that in the kingdom of God—at which we arrive by means of a right faith and good works—ye may shine as the children of the light."

Lastly, the star invites and calls us to heaven, that, by means of a heavenly life, we may come to the most blessed company of the angels and all the heavenly citizens.

We have seen his star in the east. Some writers refer the words *in the east* to *we have seen.* That is, "We, being in the east, saw the star in the west, shining over Judæa:" so that the Magi knew

whither to wend their way. Similarly, the pole-star shows the way to sailors. Others, with more probability, refer *in the east* to the word *star—i. e.*, "We, in the east, saw the star there with us in the east." But both opinions are tenable. For, first, this star seems to have appeared over Judæa to signify that the King of the Jews was born there, and must there be sought. Hence, in Num. xxiv. 17, for "shall rise" the Hebrew has *darach—i. e.*, "hath proceeded." "A star proceedeth out of Jacob."

You will ask, Did the star remain stationary in the east, or was it a constant attendant upon the Magi in their journey to Judæa? Jansen, Cajetan, and others think that it remained stationary. They attempt to prove this: 1. Because the Magi say, "We have seen His star in the east." And when they departed from Jerusalem, S. Matthew says, "And lo, the star which they had seen in the east." 2. Because Herod, and the Jews, and the rest did not, as it would seem, behold the star. For had they done so, some surely would have followed it, and have come with the Magi to Christ. 3. Because the Magi knew from Balaam's prophecy that the star portended that the King of the Jews was now born. And as they knew the way to Judæa, they did not require the star to guide them.

On the other hand, SS. Chrysostom and Leo, Theophylact, S. Thomas, Lyra, Suarez, Maldonatus, and Chrysologus (*Serm.* 156) are of opinion that the star did accompany the Magi as far as Judæa. As Chrysologus says (*loc. cit.*), "When they walked, the star went on; when they sat down, it stayed; when they slept, it kept vigil over them." This is the common opinion of believers; whence the Church sings in her hymn, "The Magi went on following the star which they had seen, which went before them."

So, therefore, when the Magi say, *We have seen his star in the east*, they are speaking only of their beginning to see the star. *We have seen*, meaning "We first saw His star when we were in the east; and, being called by the sight of it, *we are come*, with that star for our guide, having followed it as it went before us until we came to Jerusalem." And because the star disappeared at

Jerusalem, they then went to Herod and the Scribes, and asked them where Christ was born.

Both opinions are probable and worthy of examination, and may perhaps be reconciled one with the other, by supposing that the star which shone in the east was of exceeding brightness, as S. Ignatius testifies, at its first appearance, when it attracted the eyes of the Magi, and to which they referred when they said "We have seen His star in the east;" but that afterwards, when it went with them in their journey, it was covered with a cloud, and shone less brightly, so that it was visible to scarcely any save the Magi; lest if other men had seen it in its utmost brilliancy, and had accompanied them in a great band to Jerusalem, they might have stirred up Herod and the Jews against Christ to destroy Him. For it was plainly fitting that the star which called forth the Magi should show them the way to Christ, who was afar off and hidden. In like manner, the pillar of fire and cloud which was the leader of the camp of the Hebrews shone before them like fire by night, but by day was covered with a cloud, as I have shown in my commentary on Exod. xiii. and Numb. ix.

But that some others besides the Magi saw the star is probable. For since the star was a large one, bright and visible to them, why not to others? For God willed Christ to be made known to all the world. Still, few or none followed the star with the Magi, both because they understood not the mystery, and because they were hindered by worldly cares. Hence we learn how necessary is powerful and efficacious grace for seeking Christ. Of this He speaks (S. John vi. 44): "No man can come unto me, except my Father draw him." Thus in the passion of Christ, the eclipse of the sun was seen at Athens by S. Dionysius, the Areopagite; and this was why he was converted by S. Paul when he learnt from him the cause of the eclipse, because, namely, it was at that very day and hour that Christ was crucified.

Suarez adds, that the star only shone by day in places near the Magi, but was at a loftier elevation by night, and was then less conspicuous. So says Nicephorus, *H. E.* i. 13.

Lastly, the Magi were appropriately called by a star, because they were astronomers. Hence they knew that this star was not a common one, but a prodigy, and portended some divine event. Thus they understood that the Maker and Lord of the stars, to whom all the stars are obedient, was born.

Hence the Church celebrates with so great solemnity the Feast of the Epiphany, in which the Magi were called to adore Christ, because in them and by them was begun the calling and salvation of the Gentiles. Wherefore S. Leo *(Serm. 2 de Epiph.)* says—"Let us, brethren beloved, recognize in the Magi, who worshipped Christ, the first-fruits of our vocation and faith, and with exulting minds let us celebrate the beginnings of blessed hope. From this time forth we began to enter into our eternal inheritance." And S. Augustine *(Serm. 2 de Epiph.)* says—"This day, on which we keep the anniversary of our festival, first shone upon the Magi. They were the first-fruits of the Gentiles, and we are the people of the Gentiles. To us hath the tongue of Apostles announced it; but to them, the star, as though the tongue of heaven. And the same Apostles, as though they were other heavens, have declared unto us the glory of God."

When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Herod was troubled, because he feared that he would lose the kingdom of the Jews, now that Messiah, their true and legitimate Prince, was born. "What wonder," says S. Augustine, "that impiety should be troubled at the birth of piety?" *(Serm. 2 de Innocent.)* Jerusalem was troubled, as well because there were many in it who favoured Herod, as because the Scribes and chief Priests, having leisure only for their own advantage, and being thus in a state of spiritual slumber, had no thought about the coming of Messiah; that now the sceptre was departed from Judah, as Jacob had foretold, Messiah should be born. Wisely does S. Gregory say *(Hom. 10. in Evangel.)*, "When the King of heaven was born, the earthly king was troubled, because, indeed, terrestrial exaltation is confounded when celestial greatness is disclosed." "For," as S. Fulgentius says *(Serm. 1*

de Epiphan.), "This King came, not to fight against and conquer earthly kings, but, by dying, marvellously to subdue them. Not, therefore, was He born to be thy successor, O Herod; but that the world might faithfully believe in Him." "Christ seizes not thy royalty," says S. Leo, "nor would the Lord of the universe be contented with thy petty sceptre. He, whom thou wishest not to be king in Judæa, reigns everywhere, and thyself wouldst reign more prosperously if thou wouldst be subject to His sway."

And Herod, as we may see in Josephus, cut off all the members of the royal house of Judah, lest there should be any rival to his sovereignty.

And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. He calls the learned doctors of the law, the Scribes, who occupied themselves in transcribing, reading, and expounding the sacred Scriptures. They are sometimes called lawyers; such a one was Ezra.

And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judæa, for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda, for out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel.

I have explained this prophecy in my Commentary upon Micah v., so that I shall not here repeat it. Only let us observe three discrepancies between S. Matthew and Micah. The first is that S. Matthew, in speaking of Bethlehem, omits the name Ephratah. The explanation is that Bethlehem had two names. It was called by its founders Bethlehem and Ephratah, because Ephratah was the father of Bethlehem. (See 1 Chron. iv. 4); and *Ephratah* in Hebrew signifies *fruitful*, or *fruit-bearing*. *Bethlehem* has a similar meaning, being *house of bread*. The literal reason why Christ would be born at Bethlehem was that He might be accounted David's Son, who was promised to him, who was himself born in Bethlehem. The moral reason was to teach us humility, to be content with a lowly parentage, a lowly country, a humble cottage. Whence S. Leo *(Serm. 1 de Epiph.)* says—"He who took the form of a servant chose Bethlehem for

His birthplace, that in that obscure place He might hide His glory, but Jerusalem for His passion, that He might the more make known abroad the shame of the Cross." He taught us, therefore, to cover our glory, to uncover our shame. He here taught us that heavenly glory, which is a paradox to the world, is, that "the way to glory is flight from glory." Christ, who is a star—*i.e.*, a light and guide to glory and blessedness—hid Himself, and His Godhead and His dignity of Messiah, by abiding in the manger of Bethlehem. And therefore God the Father displays Him to the whole world, and glorifies Him by means of a star shining out of heaven. If, therefore, thou seekest true glory, shun fame, court ignominy; for if thou desirest glory, thou shalt lose it; but if thou despisest it, then, even against thy will, thou shalt be had in honour. For this paradox is most true—"Glory follows him that shuns it, flees from him that pursues it, as a shadow the body." "Humility goeth before honour." (Prov. xv. 33.) God exalteth the lowly, and humbleth the proud. Whence "Christ emptied Himself and made Himself of no reputation, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross: wherefore also God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name, which is above every name." (Phil. ii.)

2. The second discrepancy is, that for, *thou art not the least*, as S. Matthew has it, Micah has, *thou art a little one* (*parvulus*, Vulg.)—*i.e.*, *art the least*, or *very little*. The explanation is that, in Micah, an adversative particle is implied from the context, as in Ps. cxix. 141, 157, meaning "Very little art thou, O Bethlehem, if I look at thy walls, thy citizens, thy buildings, thy fame; but yet very far art thou from being little, if I consider the princes that have come from thee, and that have been and shall be born in thee. For in thee was born King David, and of thee shall be born Christ, David's antitype." Some read the words in Micah interrogatively—*Art thou very small?* That is, *Thou art by no means the least*, but, by reason of Christ, thou shalt become very great and famous.

3. Instead of *among the princes*, Micah has, *among the thousands*.

The explanation is, that the Hebrew *aleph* denotes both *a thousand* and *a prince*. But either translation in this place comes to the same thing; for, *in the princes* means *among the princes—i.e.*, the cities, or even the inhabitants of Judah; this is, from the great number of princely men who have, or shall come forth from thee. *In the thousands.* This is the same as *among the cities*, which contain many thousands of people; and therefore they are princes, and have their own chiefs, or princes. For the people of Israel was divided by Moses into chiliads, or so many thousands of families, each of which had their own dukes and princes. (See Exod. xviii. 25, and Judges vi. 15.)

Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. This he did secretly, in order to avoid popular rumours, murmurs, and tumults. For the people were expecting their Messiah. It was also that he might more thoroughly and reliably find out all the particulars concerning the star. He learned from them when the star appeared, that thus he might know when Christ was born, and so, by killing all the infants who were born about that date, might slay Christ among them. For even already he had determined on the slaughter of the infants, in his own mind. Whence the Arabic version hath it, "He was informed by them concerning the time in which the star appeared to them."

And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child, and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. This was the fox-like cunning of a fox. He would make the Magi obedient and faithful to himself, by pretending that he wished to worship Christ, when he was taking thought how to kill Him. So Caracalla, in order to reign alone, slew his brother Geta in his mother's arms, because he was associated with him in the empire; and, to extenuate his crime by piety, he placed his brother among the gods, saying, "Let him be a god, so long as he is not alive." In like manner, Herod saith to the Magi, that he would worship Christ as God, whilst he purposed in his mind to kill Him as a man and a king.

And when they had heard the king, they departed, and lo! the star which they had seen in the east went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. From hence it would appear that the star which shone in the east with great effulgence, afterwards, when it accompanied the Magi, appeared less brilliant, and, at Jerusalem, was hidden altogether, so as to force the Magi to inquire of the Scribes where Christ should be born, that, by this means, it might be made known even to them that He was born. For Herod and his minions were unworthy of beholding this celestial star; for if they had, they would have used their knowledge to seek out and destroy Christ. But when the Magi departed from Jerusalem, the star again appeared, and shone with its former lustre, to indicate Christ, who is the Light—yea, the Sun of this world—and by its radiance to point out the very spot—that is to say, the stable in which he abode after his birth—so that they might not have to wander in vain, searching for Him from house to house.

When they saw the star—i.e., as brilliant as at first—*they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. Exceeding great.* This is the force of the Hebrew *gedolah meod.* And they rejoiced so greatly because, by the star being thus lustrous, they knew that they were come nigh to Messiah, and were going to Him in a direct course.

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother. From this passage some are of opinion that, after their enrolment, the wealthier people, who had come to Bethlehem for the purpose, were departed; so that there were now many houses in Bethlehem at liberty for the purpose of hospitality, and that Christ had been removed from the stable in which He was born, to some worthier abode of one of the citizens, and was there worshipped by the Magi. For it is said, *they entered into the house.* So S. Epiphanius, *Hæres.* 51, Maldonatus, and others.

But the more common opinion is, that the stable in which Christ was born is called *the house.* For the Hebrews call any place in which people live, a house, as Ps. civ. 17. *The house—i.e., the nest,*

of the coot (Ital.) *is their leader*—namely, of birds and flying creatures. For since the census of the whole people proclaimed by Augustus was being taken during some weeks and months, and since during that period a succession of wealthy people kept arriving for enrolment, and afterwards departing, there was no room for Mary and Joseph, who were poor people, in the hostelry, until the thirteenth day after Christ's birth. And God ordered this, both to try the constancy of the Magi, and to teach them and others that Christ's kingdom consists in poverty, humility, and contempt of the world, not in earthly wealth, and pride, and pomps, and palaces. So S. Augustine (*Serm.* 1 & 2 *de Epiph.*), Justin, *c. Tryph.*, Chrysostom, &c., and Suarez, which latter adds—"It is plain that Christ, and the Blessed Virgin, as a woman who had lately given birth to a child, remained in the stable until her Purification."

Whence S. Jerome (*Epist.* 17 *ad Marcellam*) says, "Behold in this little hole of the earth, the Maker of the Heavens is born. Here He was wrapped in swathings, here adored by the Magi." And Augustine (*Serm. de Epiphan.*) says: "He was lying in a manger, yet He led the Magi from the East. He was hidden in a stable, and was acknowledged in Heaven; that being recognized in Heaven, He might be manifested in a stable." You may reconcile these two opinions with each other, if you suppose that in Bethlehem, being a small city, there was only one public hospice for strangers, to which was attached a stable for their horses and other beasts of burden. And so it is said that the Magi entered into the house, or inn, because they went into the stable of the inn. S. Luke's words are in favour of this, when he says:—"There was no room for them in the inn." This means the common hospice of the place. And *they found the Babe lying in the manger*, plainly, the only manger belonging to the stable of this hospice.

No mention is made of Joseph upon this occasion, either because he had gone away into the city or the country, to procure food and other necessaries for the Blessed Virgin and Christ. And this was in accordance with the Divine purpose, that he Magi

might not suppose him to be the father of Christ, and Christ to be born as other children are. Or if he were present, he was supposed, under the name of Mary's husband, to be the guardian of Christ, and the keeper of the stable. And S. Matthew signifies by his narrative that the Blessed Virgin and Joseph so conducted themselves in the presence of the Magi, that they understood by God's inspiration that Christ was born of the Virgin alone by the power of the Holy Ghost, and that Joseph only took care of them. Wherefore it is not doubtful that the Magi conversed with Mary either in Arabic, for she had the gift of tongues, or else in Hebrew, through an interpreter, and learnt from her the manner of the Conception and Birth of Christ. And therefore they adored Him as God and the Son of God, and offered unto Him their threefold gifts, but received from Him far greater spiritual gifts for their souls, even illumination, consolation, and heavenly warmth. In return for their gold, they received the increase of wisdom and burning love; instead of their frankincense, the gift of prayer and devotion; and in exchange for myrrh, zeal for a pure and uncorrupt life.

They fell down and worshipped him. The *Arabic* has—*they fell down in adoration of him.* Erasmus thinks that the Magi did not know Christ was God, and therefore did not worship Him with *latria*, but with civil respect, as the King of the Jews. But the fathers and interpreters teach the contrary—that the Magi, by Divine inspiration, were aware of Christ's Divinity, and worshipped It with *latria*, and that for this reason, they offered Him frankincense, which is due to God alone. So S. Irenæus, lib. 3, c. 10; S. Leo, *Serm. de Epiphan.*; and others *passim.* Whence S. Fulgentius says wisely in his sermon on the Epiphany, "Consider what they offered, and you will know what they believed." Hence this day is called by the Greeks, Epiphany and Theophany—*i.e.*, the appearing of God—because on that day Christ was declared to the Magi to be God, and was worshipped by them as God.

And when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts, frankincense and gold and myrrh. In these things Arabia abounds.

(See Ezek. xxvii. 22, and Pliny, lib. 12, c. 14.) It was the ancient custom of the Arabians and other Orientals, not to approach their kings and rulers except with a gift, as it were a tribute due to them. (See Gen. xliii. 11; 1 Sam. x. 27.) Whence Seneca says (*Epist.* 17), "No one may salute the monarchs of Parthia without a present." Moreover, it was God's law (Exod. xxiii.), "Thou shalt not appear before me empty." Lastly, the Queen of Sheba gave precious gifts to Solomon, and received greater from him. Thus it was with the Magi and Christ, who is the true Solomon.

S. Bernard thinks that the Magi offered gold to the Blessed Virgin and Christ to succour their poverty, myrrh to strengthen Christ's infant limbs, frankincense to prevent the unpleasant odours of the stable. This is a very literal and undignified sense. For the fathers teach, *passim*, in a far higher way, that illuminated by the Holy Ghost they offered gold to Christ as the most wise King; for wisdom is compared to gold (Prov. viii. 19); frankincense as to God, and according to His humanity, as the High Priest and Pontiff; Myrrh to Christ as man, about to die and be buried for the redemption of the human race, and the third day to rise again to immortality and eternal glory. For the bodies of the dead are buried with myrrh, that they may remain incorrupt. Myrrh has the property of drying up moisture, and preventing the generation of worms. So S. Leo says, "Frankincense they offer to God, myrrh to man, gold to the king, wisely venerating the Divine and Human Nature joined in one. What they believe in their hearts they show forth by their gifts."

And S. Ambrose says—"Gold for a king, frankincense for God, myrrh for the dead." And S. Gregory (*Hom.* 10), "By gold they proclaim a king, by frankincense God, by myrrh a mortal man." "Very beautifully," says S. Jerome, "does the Presbyter Juvencus in one sentence comprehend the mysteries of the gifts, 'Gold, frankincense, myrrh, for a king, man, and God.'"

Grammarians derive *thus* (frankincense) from the Greek *θυόω*, *I make an odour*, or better, from *θύω*, *I sacrifice*, because the first sacrifices of primitive men were fumigations of incense. Hence,

"honours of frankincense" meant divine honours. Bede, whose words I have already quoted, asserts that the first of the Magi, whose name was Melchior, gave gold, Gaspar the second, frankincense, Balthasar the third, myrrh.

But others, with more probability, think that each of them offered all these their gifts to Christ, and that each, by these their gifts, attested their own faith in Christ as being a King and God, and about to suffer for man.

Hence the Gloss says: "All this was done by divine inspiration to signify the regal power in Christ by gold, the divine majesty by frankincense, and human mortality by myrrh."

Allegorically, these three gifts signify Christ, who offered Himself to God the Father upon the cross as it were gold, since out of golden love, even love to man, He immolated Himself; as the myrrh of the very bitter passion of His griefs and torments; and as the frankincense of the highest devotion, submission, veneration, and worship. Whence also on the same day of the week on which Christ offered Himself upon the cross the Magi offered their three gifts to Christ. For the tradition is that Christ was born on the Lord's Day. And if from thence you reckon thirteen days you will come to the Friday of the following week. For the Magi worshipped Him on the thirteenth day after His birth.

Again, Christ offered three gifts to the Holy Trinity, namely, His flesh, soul, and divinity, just as Christians offer to the same Triune God acts of faith, hope, and charity.

Tropologically, in the first place, gold is charity, or love, and wisdom; frankincense is prayer and devotion; myrrh is mortification. Whence S. Gregory says (*Hom.* 10), "We offer gold, if we shine by the light of wisdom; frankincense, if we are redolent with fervent prayer; myrrh, if we mortify the vices of the flesh. Hence in Cant. v. 14, the bride says of Christ, the bridegroom: "His hands are as gold rings, full of hyacinths." (Vulg.) "His hands," that is, the works of Christ, and therefore perfect. They are as rings, they may be turned and adapted to every thing good. They are golden, because adorned with charity; full of hyacinths, because

they breathe the love of heavenly things. Thus the golden works of charity make golden hands. As many works of charity as thou doest, so many golden rings dost thou put upon thy fingers, yea, verily, upon the fingers of Christ. "Good works," says S. Bernard (*de Convers. ad Cleric.*, c. 15), are the seed of eternity and of eternal glory." The very celebrated painter, Zeuxis, used to paint very slowly. Being asked the reason, he replied—"I paint for eternity." Thus also do thou, O believer, work, live, paint, for eternity, that thy works may, through all eternity, shine in heaven before God, the angels, and the blessed. That frankincense denotes prayer, and myrrh mortification, is plain from Cant. iv. 7, "I will go to the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense." And i. 13, "My beloved is a bundle of myrrh unto me." And iv. 14, "The smell of thy garments is as the odour of frankincense," *i.e.*, lifting up prayers and sighs to God. "For," says S. Gregory, "in all his works he prays, whilst he performs all such good works as he is able to do, with the intention of arriving at heavenly things." The same says on Cant. chap. iii., "The holy soul makes its heart, as it were, a thurible to its God." Mark the saying of S. Gregory Nyssen., "The cause of sin is not to implore the help of God by prayer."

Again, gold is voluntary poverty. For this poverty is most rich, and far more pleasing to God than all the gold in the world. Whence the apostle, "As having nothing, and yet possessing all things." (2 Cor. vi. 10.)

Frankincense is obedience, whereby a man offers his own will and intellect, yea, his entire self, to God, as a holocaust of frankincense.

Myrrh is fasting, mortification of the flesh; and what springs from mortification, chastity. Wherefore many think that the three vows of religion are here mystically signified: namely by frankincense, the vow of obedience; by myrrh, the vow of chastity; by gold, the vow of poverty.

Moreover, by these three gifts three kinds of good works are denoted: almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, to which all species

of virtues may be referred. For almsgiving helps our neighbour; prayer worships and calls upon God; fasting steadies a man within himself. So then, by means of these three, we offer to God whatever good things we have—namely, by almsgiving, our works; by prayer, our souls; by fasting, our bodies.

Anagogically, S. Maximus thinks that by gold is signified man's redemption, by frankincense the Christian religion, by myrrh the resurrection.

And having received an answer from God (Vulg.: the *Greek*, χρήσμοι, signifies *oracles;* and the word *answer* implies, that the Magi in a doubtful matter, in the first place asked light of God, and received an answer from Him), *in a dream, that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.* Cyril, the monk, in his life of the Abbot S. Theodosius, relates that the Magi, when they fled from Herod, avoided high roads and public hospices, and rested in mountains and caves. "Because," he adds, "they had determined not to enter Jerusalem, it was difficult for them to return home any other way, just as we see now is the case, those who come from Bethlehem pass through Jerusalem."

The author of the *Imperfect Commentary* cries out in admiration of the faith and constancy of the Magi: "O faith! which contradicted not the admonition of the angel, nor said, 'We have come so great a journey; as we came we feared not the crowds of so many cities; we were not terrified at the face of that dreadful king, but we stood before him and confidently proclaimed that King who had been born, and we offered unto Him, as God, worthy gifts; and now you bid us conceal ourselves like slaves, and take to flight, as having come one way and departing another way.' But they continued faithful. And as before they were not afraid to be known, so now they blushed not to depart in secret."

Tropologically, Herod is the devil, the world, and the flesh, and the way to him is pleasure and greed. They, therefore, who pass from him to Christ, walk by the other way of the cross and morti-

fication; and thus it behoves them to return to their own country —that is, the heavenly paradise.

Hear the author of the *Imp. Com.* (*Hom.* 2): "He who comes from the devil to God must never walk by the way by which he went to the devil. Thou wentest by the way of fornication; for the future, walk by the way of chastity. Thou wentest by the way of avarice; walk for the rest of thy life in the way of almsgiving. For if thou goest back by the way by which thou camest, thou shalt come again under the dominion of Herod, and shalt become a traitor to Christ." And S. Gregory saith (*Hom.* 10), "Our country is paradise. And when we have known Jesus, we are forbidden to return to it by the way which we came. For we departed from our country by pride, by disobedience, by following things that are seen, by tasting the forbidden fruit. But we must return to it by weeping, by obedience, by despising things that are seen, and by bridling the carnal appetite. We return to our country by another way; because we left the joys of paradise by the way of pleasures, we return to them by the way of sorrows.

And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. Note that these things did not happen immediately after the adoration of the Magi. Something must be supplied here from S. Luke (ii. 22). That is to say, after their departure on the 6th of January, Christ was taken to Jerusalem, and presented in the Temple; this was on the 2nd of February. From thence He returned to His own country, Nazareth, and from thence He fled into Egypt. So Euthymius and Maldonatus, *in loc;* also Ammon and Tatian, *in Harmon. Evangel.* Although S. Augustine, and Jansen after him, think that Christ went into Egypt from Judæa, and not from Galilee, because S. Matthew here says (ver. 22), that when Joseph was returning from Egypt, he was minded to go into Judæa. And so they say that he had fled into Egypt from Judæa, But S. Matthew does not say this expressly, but, "When he heard

that Archelaus reigned in Judæa in the stead of his father, Herod, he was afraid to go thither." This, indeed, intimates that he was thinking of going into Judæa, probably to Jerusalem and the Temple, there to give God thanks for his safe return, as pious persons are wont to do.

The reason why Christ fled into Egypt, rather than into Assyria, or any other country is:—1. Because it was near to Judæa, and on account of the streams of the Nile, by which it was surrounded, and the sea, by which it was washed, secure from the attacks of enemies. Hence, when the Jews fled from the Chaldæans and the Assyrians, they went into Egypt.

2. Because Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the children of Israel, from whom Christ was sprung, dwelt in Egypt for two hundred years, and were called forth from thence by God, by the hand of Moses. And this was a type of the calling back of Christ out of Egypt, as S. Matthew adds, *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet* (Hosea xi.), *saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.* Especially because the Hebrews were delivered out of Egypt by the blood of the Paschal Lamb, which was a type of Christ. "That not without that region the sacrament of the one only Victim might be prepared, in which first the safe-giving sign of the slaying of the Lamb, and the Passover of the Lord, had been prefigured," says S. Leo. (*Serm.* 3 *de Epiph.*)

3. Because Egypt was full of idols and superstitions. They worshipped dogs, crocodiles, cats, calves, rams, goats, and what not? Christ entered into Egypt that He might cleanse it from this filthiness, and consecrate it to the true God. Listen to S. Leo (*Serm.* 2 *de Epiph.*): "Then also the Saviour was brought to Egypt, in order that a nation given up to ancient errors might now be signed for salvation nigh to come, for hidden grace, and that she which had not yet cast out superstition from her mind might receive truth as her guest." Whence also Isaiah prophesies mystically of the same thing (xix. 1), saying: "Behold the Lord shall ascend upon a light cloud, and shall enter into Egypt, and

all the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence." And so S. Jerome and others relate that the idols of Egypt did, in truth, fall down when Christ came into it. (See my comment on this chapter of Isaiah.)

Sozomen (lib. 5, c. 20) relates that there was an ancient tradition that when Christ entered Hermopolis, a city of Egypt, a lofty tree bowed herself down, and worshipped Him as God. Many such-like things are told, but because they are taken from an apocryphal book, called the "Infancy of the Saviour," and from the Koran, it would seem that they ought to be rejected, as fabulous, or of doubtful credit.

For Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. The angel knew this by the revelation of God. He would also conjecture the same thing from the disposition of Herod, and his ambition of reigning. Herod's suspicious, cruel, savage disposition is thus described by Josephus (lib. 1, *de Bell. Jud.* c. 19): His fear made him timid, and incited him to every kind of suspicion. And from dread lest any who were obnoxious to him should escape him, he put to the torture many who were innocent.

When he arose, he took the young child, and his mother by night (mark his prompt obedience) *and fled into Egypt*—that Christ might sanctify and bless it by His coming. Hence faith and sanctity so flourished in Egypt that it produced the Pauls, the Antonys, the Macarii, and those crowds of monks and anchorites who emulated the life of angels upon earth, as is seen in Eusebius, S. Jerome, Palladius, S. Athanasius, and the lives of the Fathers. Whence S. Chrysostom, *in loc.*, says, that Christ converted Egypt into a paradise. "Heaven does not shine so brightly with the various choirs of the stars as Egypt is illuminated by its innumerable habitations of monks and virgins." And Trismegistus, quoted by S. Austin (lib. 8, *de Civ. Dei*, c. 14), says, "Egypt is an image of Heaven, and the temple of the whole world."

Adrichomius adds out of Brocardus and Saligniac, in his description of the Holy Land (page 47, n. 116), on the word Engaddi, that when Jesus fled out of Judæa into Egypt, He took

balsam with Him. For Cleopatra, the friend of Antony, envying Herod the possession of such a treasure, obtained from Antony the privilege of transporting balsam-plants out of Judæa into Egypt. (See Josephus, lib. 5, *Bell. Jud.* c. 13.) This was a just judgment of an avenging God, that Herod before was the possessor of the balsam, but that when he persecuted the child Jesus, Jesus fleeing into Egypt should, as it were, draw the garden of balsam after Him. For Jesus is the true and pure balsam of the soul, according as it is said, "Thy name is oil poured forth." (Cant. i. *Vulg.*) Adrichomius adds, this garden in Egypt is irrigated by a small fountain, which has, however, a very copious supply of water; and the tradition is, that in it the Child Jesus was often placed by the Blessed Virgin, and that the holy Joseph often drew water from it, for himself and his holy spouse, when they were in Egypt; and that it is therefore held in great veneration by the inhabitants of the country.

Anselm asserts that Christ, when in Egypt, dwelt in a city called Heliopolis, or the city of the sun. In short, this flight of Christ was a mark, not of fear, but of prudence and fortitude. Hear Chrysologus (*Serm.* 50): "So Christ was born that He might make man anew; and that He might recall the fugitives, He fled. And if He himself wandered, so that He might call back the sheep which was wandering upon the mountains, how shall He not flee to bring again His flying people?" And shortly afterwards, "The refuge of all things fled, the help of all things lies hid, the strength of all things fears, the defence of all things defends not himself." And again—"When the valiant warrior flies in battle, it is of design, not fear. When God fled from man, it was a mystery, not from dread."

Tropologically, Christ fled into Egypt that He might teach us to despise exile, and that we, as pilgrims and exiles on the earth, might pant after and strive for heaven as our true country. Whence Peter Chrysologus says (*Serm.* 115), "Christ fled that He might make it more tolerable for us, when we have to flee in persecution." S. Gregory Nazian. (*Orat.* 28) says—"Every land,

and no land is my country." No land was Gregory's country, because heaven was his country. Again, every land was his country, because he looked upon the whole world as his country. Thus Socrates, when he was asked what countryman he was, replied, "A citizen of the world." S. Basil said the same, as Nazian. testifies (*Orat.* 20)—"In every land the brave man is as much at home as fishes in the sea."

And was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son. He cites Hos. xi. 2. See my comment on that prophet, where I have fully expounded the passage.

Tropologically, S. Chrysostom, *in loc.*, says, that God weaves, as it were, a fair and variegated crown out of the prosperous and adverse circumstances of the life of Christ and Christians. When Joseph saw his wife great with child, he was sorely troubled: but forthwith an angel came to him, and put an end to his suspicion, and drove away his fear. Then came the joyful adoration of the Magi, but this was followed by the persecution of Herod, and the flight into Egypt.

It cannot be doubtful that when the Egyptians saw the sanctity of the Blessed Virgin and Joseph, and had had frequent opportunities of converse and intercourse with them, they came to know, worship, and love the true God. The Roman Martyrology assigns the 7th of January to the return of Christ from Egypt. Some say that he was three years in Egypt, some seven, others eight. But nothing is certain.

Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof. When Herod saw that the wise men did not return, he supposed that they were under a delusion, and had not found Christ, and were therefore ashamed to return. But when he heard of the things which had happened at the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, on the 2nd of February, how holy Simeon and Anna had openly professed Him to be the Messiah—that is, "a light to lighten the Gentiles,

and the glory of the people of Israel"—he then saw that he had been mocked by the Magi, and belched forth his burning wrath upon all the children. For, as S. Chrysostom says, "Unquenchable is the anger which jealousy of the rival of a crown enkindles. Like a wounded wild beast, it tears in pieces whatever meets the eye, as if the cause of his wounds."

Herod's inordinate ambition for retaining and augmenting the kingdom of Judæa drove him to this horrible infanticide. He knew from the Scribes that the time of Messiah was near at hand, because the sceptre of Judah was transferred to himself, an alien. And he himself was ambitious of the title, and told the Jews that he was their promised Messiah. And he built them that magnificent Temple, rivalling Solomon's, of which the Jews said to Christ, *Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it in three days?* But vainly did he covet the name of Messiah; for Messias was to spring out of Judah, and was the promised son and heir of David. But Herod was sprung from the Idumæans, who were the Jews' constant enemies. Herod then, becoming aware that the true Messiah was born, and had been indicated to the Magi by a star, destined Him to death. And when he learnt from the Scribes that He was born in Bethlehem, but knew not in what family, or house, he slew all the infants of Bethlehem. But see here the just judgment of God, by which it came to pass that Herod, by that very act, confirmed the kingdom to Christ, and took it away from himself. For, as a punishment of his wickedness, Herod slew his own sons, who would have succeeded him in his kingdom, and in the same year, shortly after this massacre of the infants and his son Antipater, he himself was eaten of worms, and died just before the Passover. Again, Christ escaped the massacre of the infants by flying into Egypt; and from thence, by degrees, His name, and kingdom, and glory increased. Yea, the infants slain by Herod out of hatred of the Messiah, by their very death attested that Christ was born.

Tropologically, Herod is the devil, who strives to cut off infants

—that is, those who are weak in faith and virtue, also the first inspirations from God, and good thoughts, before they have become strong and increased. "Whence if he slay the little ones," says S. Leo *(Serm. 2 de Epiph.)*, "he appears to himself to kill Jesus, which indeed he strives to do without ceasing, whilst he endeavours to deprive those newly born again of the Holy Spirit, and to kill, as it were, the infancy of tender faith."

From two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. The Greek is,—ἀπὸ διετιᾶς—*i.e., from two years.* The Syriac and Arabic give this turn to it, *from the son of two years.* The Egyptian, *from two years and under.* Thus, also, the Persian version. For, *diligently inquired*, the Greek has ἠκρίβωσε, *accurately searched out.*

You will ask why he slew all the children under two years old, especially since many are of opinion that Herod slew them immediately after the departure of the Magi—as soon, that is, as he had heard of Christ's Presentation in the Temple. And this was before the Passover, when Christ was three months old? Jansen, Maldonatus, Baronius, and others reply, that he did it out of his intense fear of losing his kingdom through Messiah, and so extended the three months from Christ's birth to two years. If you object that Matthew says this slaughter was made from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the Magi, they answer that the expression, *according to the time*, &c., must be referred, not to the words, *from two years old*, but to, *from under*, so as to signify that Herod made, not a beginning, but only a termination of slaughtering the children, *according to the time which he had inquired of the Magi*, that, indeed, he should not further kill infants who were born subsequent to those thirteen days which had elapsed after the appearance of the star which indicated the birth of Christ; meaning that Herod slew all the infants from two years old because he was very sagacious and cruel; and below two years old, according to the time which he had carefully inquired of the Magi, because he excepted only those from slaughter who were born after the time

at which the star had declared the birth of Christ; for he felt secure that none of those who were born after the star could be Messiah, and give him cause of apprehension.

But it seems scarcely credible that one so ambitious and fearful as Herod should have wished to kill infants born two years before the appearing of the star, and yet have spared those who were born a few days after its appearance, when there would be an equal or greater reason for suspecting that Christ might be amongst these last, especially in the case of such a very suspicious person as Herod. Whence Bede, the Gloss, Dionysius, and Barradi think that he killed the little infants who were born after as well as before the appearing of the star. But why did he slay infants born almost two years before the star appeared? for there could be no suspicion that Christ was born amongst them. So that to kill them would have been not merely inhuman, but altogether foolish and brutish, and could have had no other effect than to expose him to universal infamy and execration—yea, to raise up every one in arms against him as an intolerable tyrant, and more like a wild beast than a human being.

I maintain, therefore, that not immediately, nor even in the same year in which the Magi came, did Herod put the infants to death; but in the following, or second year from the birth of Christ. And so the meaning is, that Herod slew the children *from two years old,* that is, *who were two years old and under,*—that is, those who had not yet reached that age; but who were a year, or so many months, or days old. That is, he slew all who had been born within two years from the rising of the star, *according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.* Again, the expression, *according to the time,* &c., might more strictly and precisely be taken thus: Herod did not take the whole time of the two years, but drew his conclusions from when the star appeared, which was the period whence the rising of the star began, but which was not completed. For Herod slew the children in the second year from the rising of the star, about the time of the Passover, or when Christ was about a year and three months old. Where-

fore. he did not slay those who were born much before the fifteen months since which the star appeared. This is the force of the expression, *he diligently inquired*, in order that he might slay only those who had been born about the time when the star appeared, and not those who were born much before or much after, that he might not, with uselessly barbarous cruelty, slay more than might be necessary to secure the death of Christ.

So that, *from two years old and under*, &c., means the same thing as *those who were fifteen months old.* That was the time of the appearance of the star, and it continued for thirteen days, during which it went before the Magi to Bethlehem. Herod, therefore, would only seem to have slain the infants who were about fifteen months of age. For he believed the wise men, that Christ had been born at the time when his birth had been indicated by the star, and neither much before nor yet much after. So that he did not desire that any should be slain except such as were born about the time of the star's appearance. And hence we may gather that the expression, *from two years old and under*, should be taken, not disjunctively, but unitedly, as when we say, "Two and three are five;" "All the planets are seven," &c.

That this murder of the Innocents took place, not in the third month, but after the commencement of the second year, or about fifteen months from the birth of Christ, is the common opinion of Eusebius (*in his Chronicle*), Epiphanius (*Hæres.* 30), S. Augustine (*Serm. de Epiph.*), Encherius, Cedrinus, S. Anselm, Haymo, Hugo Victor, S. Thomas, &c. But some of these have not correctly distinguished either the rising of the star from the birth of Christ (for they say that it appeared to the Magi two years before Christ's birth, as SS. Augustine and Chrysostom); or the birth of Christ and the appearance of the star from the adoration of the Magi; for they say that on account of the length of the journey, they arrived at Bethlehem, and worshipped Christ there, two years after His birth. So S. Epiphanius (lib. 2, *Hæres.* 30, *contra Ebionæos*), and the Imperfect Author; for it is far more probable that the star arose at the same time that Christ was born,

that it might be, as it were, an indicator and standard-bearer of that event, and that the Magi came to Bethlehem in the same year in which the birth of Christ took place,—indeed thirteen days afterwards; and that Herod put off the infanticide, which he had already planned in his mind, until the year following, for reasons which I shall assign presently. The obvious meaning of S. Matthew's narrative, and especially the expression, *from two years old*, require this meaning. Also the number of events which happened after the Adoration, and before the Flight into Egypt, require the same sense; for after the departure of the Magi, Christ was presented in the Temple on the 2nd of February. After that He went and dwelt in Nazareth, and from that place fled into Egypt, as is clear from S. Luke (ii. 22—39). And all this would occupy many weeks, or rather months.

What Nicephorus (lib. 1, c. 14) and Cedrinus say is in favour of this opinion. They say that S. John Baptist, on account of this persecution, fled into the wilderness when he was in his second year, that is,—when he was not quite two years old. For the Baptist was born six months before Christ; so that, at the time of the Infanticide, he was a year and nine months old. Whence Nicephorus relates: "When John was a year and a half old, he was preserved in safety, with his mother Elizabeth, in a cave in the mountains, probably to escape the bloody hand of Herod."

Again, Macrobius says, not from two years old, but under two years, the infants were slain by Herod. Those who were fifteen months would be under two years old. In addition to this, Lucius Dexter says, in his Chronicle: "In the third year of Christ (U.R.C. 754) Herod slays all the male children in Bethlehem and its neighbourhood." It was the third year from the birth of Christ by beginning the year with the 1st of January.

You may ask why Herod put off the Infanticide until the second year from the rising of the star and the birth of Christ. It is answered:—

1. That he might the better, by degrees, inform himself of the birth, person, parentage, and dwelling of Christ. So the Gloss.

Again, because he sought by all means to avoid the imputation of such hateful cruelty, by finding and killing Christ alone. S. Matthew appears to intimate this (ver. 13). So S. Augustine (*lib. de Consens. Evang.* 2, c. 12).

2. Because, as Euthymius, S. Thomas, and Lyra show, Herod, towards the close of his life, being accused by the Arabians before Augustus Cæsar, that emperor three times refused even to speak to his ambassadors, although at length with wonderful art he appeased Cæsar, as Josephus relates, *Ant.* lib. 17, c. 7, &c. And then he sought and obtained permission from Augustus, as it would seem, to slay the children; in which Augustus deserves no small blame for giving this permission. So Ruperti, lib. 2 *de Vict.*, c. 2.

3. He delayed the massacre in order to find out a sure way of killing all the infants, that none might be hidden by their mothers and so escape. Hence Abulensis thinks that Herod, in the first place, ordered the little boys to be enrolled with the name and age of each; and, when he had gathered them together, slew them all; but that he gathered them, not in one place, but in the various villages or districts, to each of which he sent executioners to seek out, gather together, and slay. Such a thing might be easily done amongst the Jews, because they kept very exact records of their genealogies, that it might be known that Messiah was born, according to Jacob's prophecy of the tribe of Judah. Hence, when any child was circumcised, his name and parents, and the date of his birth, were set down, just as parish priests register the children who are baptized.

S. Antoninus thinks that Herod instituted a feast for boys, and ordered all the mothers to bring all their children who were about two years of age, as though they were to receive a reward.

Moreover Herod obtained leave from Augustus to put his own three sons, Alexander, Aristobulus, and Antipater to death. Whence he slew the first two named some time previously, and Antipater about five days before his own death, which happened,

says Josephus, at the Passover, in the thirty-seventh year of his reign. (*Ant.* lib. 17, cc. 10 & 11.) And it was then he slew the young children. This we learn from Macrobius who, amongst other anecdotes of Augustus, relates this (*Saturnal.* lib. 2, c. 10): "When he heard that the king of the Jews had ordered the boys in Syria under two years old to be slain, and that his own son had been killed, he said, 'It were better to be Herod's pig than his son, because the Jews do not eat pork.'"

From what has been said, it may be gathered that the infants were slain about the time of the Passover, or about fifteen months from the birth of Christ. The Church, however, celebrates their festival at Christmas, because they were killed for Christ's sake, that she may thus, as it were, magnify and decorate the Festival of the Nativity. Barradi, however, and Emmanuel Sa., think that they were slain on the anniversary of the very day on which the Church keeps their festival. They were slain when Christ was in the second year of His age, in spring and in the month of March, when their ancestress, Rachel, had died (Gen. xxxv. 16). It was about the same time that he ordered his own son Antipater to be put to death. He also cut off the Sanhedrim, as the great Council of the Jews is called, together with many of the Pharisees, because they would not acknowledge him to be king. The rest were compelled to take an oath of allegiance. In doing these things, he was aided by his father-in-law, Simon the son of Boethus, whom he had made high priest. And all was with the connivance of Quintilius Varro, the governor of Syria, a friend of Herod's. Whence he was not afraid to shut up all the chief of the Jews in prison, and would have put them to death if he had lived. For just before his own death, he ordered his sister Salome, and her husband, Alexas, to kill them, in order, as he said, "that the Jews may wail at my death, whether they like it or not, since they must weep for their own friends." But Salome, who was of a milder disposition, set them all at liberty as soon as Herod was dead. So Josephus, &c.

Some think from the Apocalypse (xiv. 1) that the infants who

were slain by Herod were 144,000, But S. John is speaking of the Virgins who shall resist the lust and persecution of Antichrist, even unto death and martyrdom. Neither is it credible that in so small a district as that of Bethlehem there were 144,000 boys under two years old. What the Abyssinians have in their Canon of the Mass, that the number was 14,000 is rather more probable; of this opinion are the Jesuit Salmeron, Franc. Lucas, and Gerebrard (lib. 2, *Chronolog. A.C. III.*). This last adds, that the Greeks give the same number in their Kalendar. And yet it is hard to suppose that there could be 14,000 infants in so small a place, more than are to be found in Rome, or Naples, or Milan, or other large cities.

Note, in the first place, that the infants who were slain by Herod, through hatred of Christ, were true martyrs, and as such are honoured by the Church, and their Festival kept. And the same may be said of all infants who are killed out of hatred to the Faith, through the unmerited and bountiful disposition of God.

Whence it follows that martyrdom justifies *ex opere operato*, for by it these little ones who had not yet been circumcised were cleansed from original sin and justified; and the same thing was wrought which baptism worketh. So the Fathers and Doctors, *passim*, and indeed the whole Church. (See S. Bernard, *Serm. de Innocent.*) Hence Doctors teach that there are three classes of martyrs. To the first belong those who, in deed as well as will, are martyrs. Such are adults who voluntarily accept death from a tyrant for the sake of Christ. The second class are those who are martyrs only in deed, such as infants who are slain for Christ. The third are those who are martyrs only in will—who desire martyrdom as S. Francis desired it. With this object in view he sent to the sultan of Egypt; but he, seeing him to be a holy man, would not kill him. Thus he missed the laurel crown of actual martyrdom.

Note, secondly, the wonderful providence of God, whereby, first, He punished the Bethlehemites by the slaughter of their

children, because they themselves would not receive the Blessed Virgin, and her Son Jesus with hospitality, but compelled her to go into a stable, and there bring forth. Secondly, because by means of this massacre, He decorated the boys themselves, who were slain, with the laurel of martyrdom. Thirdly, because He brought about that Christ should escape by flight into Egypt, and should through this slaughter become better known to the world. By this "it was prophetically declared that the Church of God should increase by the cruel fury of her persecutors; since by the punishments and deaths of the blessed martyrs, whilst Christians were supposed to be diminished in numbers, they were augmented by example." (S. Leo, *Serm. de Epiph.*) "And the blood of the martyrs is the seed of Christians," as Tertullian observes in the end of his *Apology*.

Moreover, Christ as He was man, although an infant, had the use of reason. And when the Word, which was united to Him, revealed to Him this slaughter of the little children for His sake, He grieved, because of the deep sympathy of His tenderness, and suffered with them and their parents. But in spirit He exulted over their glory and martyrdom. And thus He offered them to God the Father, as the first-fruits of His Advent, and the earliest oblations of His grace.

Note, thirdly, God's just vengeance upon Herod for his murder of the infants, and as far as in him lay of Christ Himself. For, five days after the masacre, he himself breathed out his cruel soul; being smitten with fever, a cough, dysentery, dropsy, gout, consumption, the lousy disease, putrefaction, asthma, and such an intolerable stench, that he endeavoured to lay violent hands upon himself. His sons were not allowed to reign as kings, but were only tetrarchs, and perished miserably. Also his entire posterity, most numerous as it was, became, with few exceptions, entirely extinct within a hundred years, as Josephus relates (*Ant.* lib. 17, c. 8, &c.), who adds that all men were of opinion that it was the effect of the just vengeance of God.

Allegorically, the infants slain by Herod at the Passover, as it

were Paschal lambs, were a type of Christ, who, thirty-two years afterwards, was mocked by Herod, a descendant of this Herod the infanticide, and crucified by Pilate at the season of the Passover, and who offered Himself to God the Father, as it were a Lamb and a Paschal Victim, for the salvation of the world. Hear S. Augustine *(Serm. 8 de Sanctis)*: "When Christ was born, grief began, not in heaven, but on earth. To mothers is proclaimed lamentation, to angels exultation, to infants translation. He is God who is born. To Him innocents are due as victims, for He came to condemn the wickedness of the world. Angels ought to be immolated, because the Lamb, who taketh away the sins of the world is about to be crucified. But the mother-sheep lament, because they lose their lambs bleating without speech: a glorious martyrdom, though a cruel spectacle."

And Prudentius, in his hymn, says:—

> "You, tender flock of lambs, we sing,
> First victims slain for Christ your King:
> Before the Altar's heavenly ray,
> With martyr palms and crowns ye play."

Symbolically, the children who were slain by Herod in the springtime were like vernal flowers put forth in the country of Bethlehem by the warmth of the rays of the Sun of righteousness, and offered to Jesus of Nazareth as the Flourishing One. Whence Prudentius in his Epiphany hymn, and the Church in her office, sing:—

> "All hail ye infant martyr flowers,
> Cut off in life's first dawning hours;
> As rosebuds snapt in tempest strife,
> When Herod sought your Saviour's life."

And S. Augustine *(Serm. 2 de Innocent.)*: "How happily born were they whom eternal life met on the threshold of existence." And (*Serm.* 3): "Rightly are these Innocents called the flowers of the Martyrs, whom, in the mid-winter of unbelief, a hoar frost as it were of persecution caused to bloom like the primal buds of the Church."

And S. Chrysostom (*Serm.* 4) says: "Infancy, unconscious of suffering, bore away the palms and crowns of martyrdom. True martyrs of grace! they confess without voice; knowing it not, they fight; ignorant of it, they conquer; unconscious, they die; they bear away the palms, they seize the crowns."

We see that God made these little ones first to triumph, then to live. He adorns them with crowns before He bestows upon them perfect members.

Tropologically, Christ loves infants, that is, the little ones and the lowly; and raises such to the perfection of grace, that is, to martyrdom. Hence He Himself says, "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Hear S. Leo (*Serm.* 7, *in Epiphan.*): "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, the whole discipline of Christian wisdom consisteth, not in a copious flow of words, nor in cunning disputation, nor in the desire of praise and glory, but in true and voluntary humility, which the Lord Jesus Christ, from His mother's womb even unto the death of the Cross, both chose and taught instead of every kind of strength." And shortly afterwards: "He loveth infancy, which at the first He assumed, both in mind and body. Christ loveth infancy, the mistress of humility, the rule of innocence, the pattern of meekness. Christ loves infancy, which guides the manners of elders; unto which He directs the years of old men, and inclines to His own example those whom He would lift on high to the eternal kingdom." And previously: "The whole victory of the Saviour, which overcame both the devil and the world, was conceived and completed by humility."

Verses 17, 18.—*Then was fulfilled*, &c. *They are not*, because indeed, *as far as the body was concerned they perished*, in that they were slain by Herod; but as to their souls, they were carried into eternity, says S. Hilary.

I have explained this passage in my Commentary on Jeremiah xxxi. 15, which see.

S. Augustine graphically portrays this weeping of the mothers (*Serm.* 1 *de Innocent.*), and thus concludes: "The lamentation of the

mothers was mingled with the oblation of the little ones, as they passed into heaven."

Tropologically, Rachel, *the sheep*, as the word signifies in Hebrew, bewails the death of her lambs; but the angels rejoice, yea, even the little ones, because their souls passed to the society of the angels.

Whence S. Augustine (*Serm.* 3 *de Innocent.*): "Behold, the profane enemy could never have benefited the little ones by kindness as much as he did by hatred. And wherefore? Because they received the dignity of eternal life before they received the use of time present." Therefore, in being born, they died unto the world; and by dying, they began to live in heaven. To these infants are most appropriate those words of S. Paul: "We are become a spectacle (Gr. θεατρὸν, *a theatre*) to the world, and to angels, and to men." (1 Cor. iv. 9.) That is to say, in the circus, in the amphitheatre, we are seen of all. We are βιοθάνατοι,—*i.e.* we are exposed to gladiators and to wild beasts.

Wherefore consider: by this infanticide God would teach us, as by a scenic representation, that the whole of a Christian's life, from childhood unto death, is perpetual persecution, the cross and death; and that the fortitude and courage of a Christian consist rather in enduring hardness than in doing hard things; in constant patience than in fighting: for it is more difficult to suffer than to act and fight. "To *act* bravely," saith one, "is the part of a Roman; to *suffer* bravely is the part of a Christian." When Christ suffered for us, He said, "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not my face from shame and spitting." (Isaiah l. 6.)

These little ones in their turn, for Christ's sake, gave their limbs to be mangled by the executioners. A Christian may do the same, and for God's sake give his body for a prey, give it unto death, unto labours, unto torments of every kind. Thus did S. Eusebius, Bishop of Vercelli, who writes to his flock, "I have given my body to the Arians for a prey." By them he was tormented, and became a glorious martyr of Christ, and a defender

of His Godhead, even unto death. Truly saith S. Fulgentius (*de Epiph.*), "To this end God permitted Herod to slay the infants, that He might cause them to triumph over Herod." Lastly, S. Cyprian (lib. 4, *Epist.* 6 *ad Thibarit.*) says, "An age not suitable for battle was made fit for a crown. The Son of God suffered that He might make us sons of God; and the Son of Man wills not to suffer, that He may continue to be the Son of God.

Now when Herod was dead, &c. (verses 19, 20). Herod died a few days after the slaughter of Antipater, as Josephus says, and so but a few days after the murder of the Innocents, as is clear from Macrobius. Hence Christ does not appear to have remained in Egypt more than two years. For He did not go there more than one year before Herod's death; and after Herod's death, when Archelaus his son had been to Rome and returned, Christ came back from Egypt, as the Gospel here states. Thus Onuphrius Pavinus, (in his *Fasti*), and before him S. Epiphanius (*Hæres.* 78); although Baronius thinks that Christ returned from Egypt in the ninth year of His age.

They are dead, &c. *They*, viz., Herod and his sons Aristobulus, Alexander, and Antipater, who, it would appear, entered into a conspiracy with the Scribes and Pharisees against their father, and by consequence against Messiah, and were by Herod put to death.

Verses 21, 22. *When he arose, he took the young child,* &c. Observe, Archelaus reigned as tetrarch, not as king. The angel had said to Joseph, *Go into the land of Israel*. Joseph understood Judæa, because that was the most important part of the land of Israel, and therein was the temple. Thither, therefore, he thought of going to render God thanks for his happy return, especially because, by God's command, all the Hebrew males were commanded to go up to the temple thrice a year. Whence St. Augustine (lib. 2 *de Consensu. Evang.* c. 9): "The angel does not express into what part, that he may return to him again, when he is in doubt; but because he had not told him expressly, Joseph understood Judæa, the more worthy part of the

kingdom: for he thought that with such a boy he might only dwell at Jerusalem. But the angel meant Galilee."

Moreover, Joseph turned aside into Galilee, although he knew that Herod Antipas, the brother of Archelaus, ruled there. He did so, both because Archelaus was more ambitious and cruel than Antipas, as because the infant slaughter of Herod of Ascalon, the father of Archelaus and Antipas, had taken place in Judæa, namely, in Bethlehem. Wherefore Archelaus would remember it, and would easily perceive that when Christ came back to Judæa He had escaped the slaughter, and would therefore again seek to put Him to death.

Fully to enter into this history *ab ovo*, as they say, consult Josephus, *Ant.* lib. 10, c. 10, et seq. When Herod died, in the thirty-seventh year of his reign, two of his surviving sons—Archelaus, and Herod Antipas, who clothed Christ in His Passion with a white robe, to mock Him—contended together for the possession of his kingdom. Augustus entrusted the settlement of the dispute to Caius Cæsar, his grandson by his daughter Julia, who decided as follows—that neither disputant should succeed to the kingdom, but that it should be divided into four tetrarchies, whose rulers should be tetrarchs, not kings. In pursuance of this he assigned Judæa to Archelaus, Galilee to Antipas, Trachonitis to their third brother, Philip, Abilene to Lysanias. This is clear from Luke iii. 1. When, therefore, S. Matthew says, *Archelaus reigned*, you must not understand that he was a king, or had the title of a king, but of a tetrarch, or toparch, but yet with the hope of the kingdom and the kingly name, if he conducted himself well, according to the promise of Augustus Cæsar.

After Archelaus had reigned as tetrarch for nine years, he was sent into exile for his bad government, thirty-seven years after the battle of Actium, and seven before the death of Augustus. So Josephus, Eusebius, Scaliger, &c.

After Archelaus was exiled, Augustus appointed governors of Judæa, who ruled it in his name. There were three of those who presided over Judæa during the seven years which elapsed before

the death of Augustus. The first was Coponius, who, together with Quirinus, prefect of Syria, confiscated the riches of Archelaus; the second was M. Ambinius; the third was Annius Rufus.

From these facts much light is thrown upon the narratives of SS. Matthew and Luke. And, in the first place, it is clear why Matthew says that Joseph turned aside into Galilee from fear of Archelaus, reigning in Judæa. It was lest he, following in the steps of his father Herod, should seek to slay Christ, as the King of the Jews. In the second place, we see why Christ only went up to the temple in Judæa when He was twelve years old: Archelaus had been then deprived of the tetrarchy, and driven into exile. In Archelaus the race of Herod ceased to rule in Judæa, and were succeeded by Roman governors, from whom Christ had nothing to fear, for they knew Him not, and had not heard even His name.

Ver. 23.—*And he came and dwelt*, &c. S. Mark (i. 24), following the Latins, has Ναζαρηνὸς; the other Evangelists write Ναζαραῖος. Adrichomius (*Descr. Terræ Sanctæ*, p. 241, num. 73) gives the following account of Nazareth, which he has collected out of S. Jerome, Eusebius, Brochard, and others:—"Nazareth, which is interpreted *a flower*, is a fair and flourishing city of Galilee, not far from Capernaum. It is built upon a mountain, which it girds like a crown. It is two leagues from Mount Tabor, and three days' journey from Jerusalem. Here Blessed Mary, the Flower of Virgins, was born; here Christ, our Lord and Saviour, our glory and our crown, like a flower of the field, as Jerome says, was conceived and brought up in all virtues, and lived for four-and-twenty years. Hence this was His own and His father's city; hence, also, He was called *Nazarenus*, or *Nazaræus*, and *a Galilæan;* hence, too, we who now are called Christians were anciently called Nazarenes and Galilæans, as terms of reproach."

"Moreover," says Rabanus, "Galilee is interpreted *migration*, Nazareth *a flower*, because the more earnestly the Church passes over to heavenly things, the more she abounds in the flowers of virtues.

That it might be fulfilled—a Nazarene. The name of Nazareth does not once occur in the Old Testament. Hence we are unable to tell whether it were written in Hebrew with *zain* or *tsade*. If with the former, Nazareth means *sanctified, separate, consecrated;* if with *tsade, full of flowers,* or *guarded.*

The question arises, by what prophet, when, and wherefore was Christ called a Nazarene? There are several opinions; two are most probable:—

1. Christ was called a Nazarene, in Hebrew *nazir,* or *nozeri,* written with *zain,* meaning *separate, holy, consecrate, crowned, religious,* because Christ, as man, being separated from every other thing, was hypostatically and wholly united to the WORD. For the word *nazar* signifies to *separate,* to *consecrate,* to *crown.* Wherefore the religious, under the old law, who separated themselves from wine and from the world, and consecrated themselves to God, were called Nazarites. (See Numb. vi. 2, seq.) But that Christ would be holy, and consecrated to God, all the prophets foretold, especially Daniel (ix. 24): "The Holy of Holies—*i.e.,* Christ—shall be anointed." (Vulg.) Thus, too, Samson, who was a type of Christ, was a Nazarite. (Judg. xiii. 7.) So, too, was Joseph. (Gen. xlix. 2.) And as Joseph, after his imprisonment, was made lord of Egypt, so Christ, after His death, was made lord of the universe. So S. Ambrose and Ruperti.

These Nazarites, however, are called in Greek Ναζαραῖοι, written with *alpha* (*Nazaræi*); but Christ is always called Ναζωραῖος, (*Nazorœus*), written with *omega,* to distinguish him from the Nazarites, because he was not a Nazarite by vow, like them, but was called *Nazarœus,* from his country, Nazareth. Christ drank wine, which was forbidden to the Nazarites by their vow. The above is the explanation of S. Jerome on this passage, and of Eusebius (lib. 7, *de Demonstrat.* c. 2, *Dem.* 5), where he cites Levit. xxi. 12, concerning the Aaronic priest, who was a type of Christ: "Neither shall he go forth out of the holy place, because the oil of the holy anointing of his God is upon him." Instead of *holy,* as qualifying *anointing,* the Hebrew has *nezar, i.e., consecration,*

or *sanctification* with the oil of the anointing of his God. The index of Hebrew words usually found at the end of our Bibles, and Paul of Burgos, think that the passage which is here cited is Psalm cxxxii. 18: "Upon him shall flourish my sanctification." (Vulg. —Heb. *nizri*, which S. Jerome translates *his diadem*.) Whence also the golden plate affixed to the pontifical tiara, on which was inscribed, *Holiness to the Lord*, is called *nezor*, *i.e.*, a crown or diadem of holiness. (Ex. xxix. 6.) It was a type, yea, an index of Christ of Nazareth, holy and crowned. To this the Apostle alludes (Heb. ii. 9): "We see Jesus, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." On which see my comment.

Eusebius says, the LXX translate *nazer* by *holy*; Aquila has *separation;* Symmachus, *untouched*. From these, therefore, the name *Nazaræus* signifies either *holy*, or *separate*, or *untouched*. But some of the ancient priests, who were anointed with the prepared oil, which was called by Moses *nazer*, were named Nazarites from this word *nazer*. But our Saviour and Lord, by His own nature possessing in Himself holiness and separation, neither having need of any human anointing, still obtained the title of a Nazarite among men; not as though He were so called from any oil named *nazer*, but from the city Nazareth, where He was brought up among His own relations, forasmuch as He was a man. Christ, therefore, was a Nazarite, *i.e.*, separated from other men, sanctified, consecrated, and crowned High Priest, Legislator, Teacher, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of the Universe.

The letter which is employed favours this opinion. The Evangelists always wrote *Nazaræus*, or *Nazarenus*, with the letter *z*, which is the one which occurs in the Hebrew *nezer* and *nazir*. For if Nazarene is derived from נצר *nezer*, with *tsade*, so as to signify flourishing, it ought to be written *Nasarene* with an *s*. In all other names the Hebrew letter *tsade* is represented by an *s* (in the Vulg.), as in Bosra, Asor (see Joshua, chaps. xii. and xv., where some suppose Asor to be Nazareth), Melchisedech, Sabaoth, &c. On the other hand the Hebrew *zain* is translated by our *z*, as appears from Zabulon, Zacharias, Beelzebub, &c.

Let us add, it is more worthy the dignity of Christ that He should be called *Nazarene*, with the letter *zain*, *i.e.*, *holy*, than *Nasarene*, with *tsade*, that is, *flourishing*. For נזר *nazer*, *i.e.*, *holiness*, the consecration and crown of Christ, *quà* man, was the hypostatic union, or rather the actual Godhead of the WORD, which crowned, sanctified, separated to Itself, united, and consecrated the whole Humanity of Christ. Lastly, it is in favour of this opinion that S. Matthew says, "which was spoken by the *prophets*," not by the *prophet*; "by which he shows," says S. Jerome, "that he was not quoting the words of one passage of Scripture, but the sense of several."

2. It is the opinion of others that Christ is called a Nasarene from נצר *neser*, with *tsade*—*i.e.*, *flourishing*, from *flower*—or, rather, *germinating*, from *germ*. For both Aquila and Theodotion, according to S. Jerome, render *neser* in Isaiah xi. 2 by *germen*. In Isaiah xi. 2, the Vulg. has, "A flower shall spring up from his root," translating the Hebrew *neser* by *flower*. Nazarene, therefore, is the same as flourishing or germinating, growing into a great and glorious tree, and producing abundant fruit.

The first reason is that Christ is elsewhere called צמח *tsemach* —*i.e.*, *germen*, which the Vulg. renders *Oriens*, *the dawn*, or *day-star*, as though arising out of the earth. (See Zech. vi. 12; iii. 8.) For Christ sprung from the Virgin as an undefiled *germen*, or plant, and pure from every stain of sin. So He flourished with every virtue, and scattered the odour of His sweetness far and wide. Whence S. Ambrose (*lib. de Spirit. Sanct.*, c. 5) says, "When a flower is plucked, it does not lose its smell; when it is bruised, it increases it." So, when Christ was bruised in His Passion, He the more manifested the power of His Divinity and His grace.

The second reason is that in the inscription placed on the Cross of Christ, which is preserved in the Basilica of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem, in Rome, נצרי *notseri* is written with *tsade*, not *zain*. So says Pagninus, from ocular inspection. So, too, the Syrian and Arabic versions write *Nazarene* with *tsade*. And the modern

Jewish Rabbis call Christians *Notserim—i.e., Nazarenes,* writing the word with *tsade.*

I myself have often seen the title of the Cross at Rome and carefully inspected it, but the letters are so worn away that I have never been able to see that the Hebrew inscription has *tsade.* On the contrary, *zain,* not *tsade,* seemed to me to be the letter. Bosius (lib. 1 *de Cruce triumph.)* has a perfectly exact impression of the superscription of the Cross. Examine it, and you will agree with me. Besides, this title was written by Pilate the Roman governor, or his Roman servants, who had little knowledge of Hebrew, and could not tell whether Nazarene were spelt with a *tsade* or a *zain,* and certainly would not care for the distinction between them. Various commentators, as Rabanus, Salmeron, Jansen, &c., write Nazarene with a *tsade,* and translate it *flourishing,* but most of them seem to have been influenced by Pagninus, who said that he had found *notseri* spelt with a *tsade* on the title of the Cross.

Both opinions may be conjoined and reconciled with each other by saying that if you look strictly to the letters you will find נזר *nezer* with *zain*—that is to say, *holiness, consecration, crown;* yet that there is an allusion to *netser* with *tsade—i.e., a shoot, a flower*—for these two letters are somewhat akin both in form and sound, and are occasionally interchanged both with one another and with some other Hebrew letters, as appears in the conjugation *Hispael.* (See Bellarmine's Hebrew Grammar.) Wherefore the Psalmist conjoins the two (Ps. cxxxii. 18), saying: "My sanctification *(nazer)* shall flourish *(nazarene)* upon him." (Vulg.) So also S. Jerome says, "*Nazaræus* is interpreted *holy*." All Scripture testifies that the Lord shall be holy. We are able also to use, in another sense, what is written in the same words in the Prophet Isaiah according to the Hebrew verity, "Behold a rod shall come forth from the root of Jesse, and a Nazarene shall arise out of his root." Lastly, as in their letters, so also in their significations these two words are closely connected; for He who is *Nazarenus —i.e.,* separated from earthly pleasures—is likewise *Nasaræus--*

i.e., flourishing with virtues. Hence some derive the Greek ἅγιος, *holy* from ἀ, *not* and γῆ the earth; for he who is separated from the earth, cultivates heavenly things, and is holy.

Matthew adds this, because Nazareth was a small and despised town. Hence the name of Nazarene seemed both to Jews and Gentiles vile and mean, so that on account of it many were kept back from Christ, and from acknowledging Him as Messiah. Whence Nathanael said to Philip, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" And Julian the Apostate was wont, in contempt, to call Christ "the Galilæan," and "the Nazarene." When he was struck by a dart from heaven, and was about to die, he cried, "Thou hast conquered, O Galilæan, thou hast conquered."

Matthew, therefore, here shows that the name of Nazarene was a glorious one, forasmuch as it had been spoken of by the prophets, and assigned to Christ many ages previously.

The sense then is as follows—although Christ was born in Bethlehem He was conceived and brought up in Nazareth, a city small and obscure, that He might the better elude Herod and his posterity when they sought to slay Him, and that He might give us an example of humility and contempt of the pomps of the world. Whence He was called a Nazarene from the city of Nazareth, but so that not only the name Nazarene, but what was signified by the name, that is, holiness, should apply to Him. So there was in reality fulfilled what Isaiah and the prophets foretold concerning Christ, that He was *nazir*, holy, and *noseri*, or *Nasaræus*, flourishing with all virtue and grace.

Consequently, the name of Nazarene, which the Jews and others gave to Christ by way of reproach, is most illustrious, yea, a note and mark of the true Messiah; for by this very title the prophets indicated and glorified Messiah.

Tropologically, Christ is a Nazarene, *i.e.*, separated from the world and consecrated to God, flourishing with all virtues, and the origin, father, and prince of the Nazarenes, that is, the religious, who despise the world, and dedicate themselves wholly to God, that they may flourish in virtues, according to those words in Lam. iv. 7.

"Her Nazarites were fairer than snow, whiter than milk; they were more ruddy than ancient ivory, brighter than sapphires." (Vulg.) Where see my Comment.

Salmeron adds, Nazarene is the same as Samaritan, *i.e.*, a keeper (for נצר *natsar*, is *to keep, to guard*) namely of men; according to those words of Job, "What shall I do unto thee, O thou keeper of men?" (Vulg.) And Psalm cxxi., "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." So, too, Francis Lucas says, Nazarene, that is, keeper, preserver, defender. By Nazareth, therefore, the Blessed Virgin is represented, of whom Christ the Nazarene was born. For she was kept from original sin, from the shame of conception, from the corruption and pain of child-birth, and from turning to dust after death. For the body of the Virgin was not resolved into ashes after her death, as is the lot of other bodies; but it was, together with her soul, taken up into heaven. These things are true, but rather symbolical than literal.

CHAPTER III.

1 *John preacheth: his office: life, and baptism.* 7 *He reprehendeth the Pharisees,* 3 *and baptizeth Christ in Jordan.*

IN those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judæa,
2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.
4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.
5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan,
6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.
7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?
8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:
9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.
10 And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.
11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire:
12 Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.
13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

In those days, &c. This was in the fifteenth year of Tiberius, as S. Luke says, when John and Christ were about thirty years of age. Matthew passes at once from the childhood of Christ to His age of manhood, when He commenced His actual work of preaching and redemption, for which He had been sent by the Father into the world.

He sent John before Him to announce to the Jews that He was the Messiah, lest, if Christ should appear in Judæa abruptly, without one to point out who He was, or a witness worthy of credit, He should be despised of all.

Christ lived in obscurity, and exercised a workman's craft with his father Joseph for nineteen years, to give to the world a memorable example of humility. He began to preach in his thirtieth year, that He might conform Himself to the customs and laws of the Jews. Amongst them it was not lawful for any one to execute the office of a doctor or a priest before his thirtieth year. Such is the Hebrew tradition, and the same thing may be gathered from 1 Chron. xxiii. 3. Hence John began to preach in this same thirtieth year, but a little before Christ.

That Christ should be hid so long in the obscure depths of His humility S. Bernard admires when he exclaims (*Serm.* 1 *de Epiph.*), "O humility, virtue of Christ, how dost thou confound the pride of our vanity! Little enough do I know, or rather seem to myself to know, and yet I cannot know—impertinently and imprudently carrying and manifesting myself—ready to speak, swift to teach, slow to hear. And did Christ, when He kept silence for so long a time and hid Himself, did He fear vain glory? What could He fear from vain glory who is the True Glory of

the Father? He did fear, indeed, but not for Himself. He feared for us that which He knew was to be feared by us. He took cautious heed for us, and so instructed us. He kept silence with His mouth, but taught by His deeds. And what He afterwards taught in words He at this time cried aloud by His example, 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.'"

In the desert. Not in a cultivated and inhabited place. For Isaiah (xl. 3), prophesying concerning this desert of John, speaks of it as a wilderness. And this is plain from the circumstances. We behold John's rough clothing of sackcloth of camel's hair, his woodland food, the locusts and wild honey. The motive cause of this life was that, as a follower of Moses and Elias, and the precursor of Christ, in the desert, removed from the pollutions of men, he might converse with God and the angels, and might from them derive the power of strength and of the Spirit, and might acquire for himself the name and fame of sanctity, that all might give credit to him when he pointed out Christ, and, being pricked at his preaching, might repent. Whence the Fathers constantly call John the prince of monks and anchorites, as S. Jerome (*Epist.* 22 *ad Eustoch.*), S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Cassian (*Collat.* 18. 6). Hence John, living in the desert an angelic life with the angels, was regarded as an angel by Malachi (chap. iii.) and by Christ Himself (Matt. xi. 10): "This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send mine angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee." (Vulg.)

Symbolically, S. John preaching in the desert signified that the Gospel would be preached chiefly, not in Jerusalem and Judæa, but in the wilderness—*i.e.*, the deserted multitudes of the Gentiles. So S. Jerome.

Tropologically, S. John, by his example, taught that the apostolic men and preachers who were about to be, would first retire from the tumult of men to have leisure in secret for prayer and meditation, that they might thereby drink, as it were, from heaven a mighty power of the Spirit, which they should afterwards pour forth upon their hearers. (See what I have said on Hosea ii. 14:

"I will lead her into the wilderness, and will speak to her heart." —Vulg.) To this may be referred what S. Augustine says (*Epist.* 76): "He will not be a good clergyman who has not been a good monk." Wherefore SS. Augustine, Martin, Chrysostom, Nazianzen, Basil, and many more were taken out of their monasteries into the ranks of the clergy, and, even against their will, promoted to the episcopate.

The wilderness of Judæa was near the Jordan, close to Ænon and Salim (John iii. 23), and was very famous, both from the abundance of water for baptizing, as well as for being the abode and the scene of the miracles of the prophets and religious men who, in the Books of the Kings, are called *the sons of the prophets*, that is, of Elijah and Elisha, and such as they.

Lastly, Nicephorus (lib. 1, c. 14) asserts that when John was a year and a half old he was taken by his mother into the desert. Cedrinus adds, that he was concealed in a certain cave, and that his mother died there, and that an angel then took care of the child. This cave was afterwards frequented by the hermits, as appears from John Moschus (*Spiritual Meadow*, c. 1), who says that the cave was situated near the Jordan, and that by chance an abbot, John, who was sick, turned into it, where he was healed by John the Baptist, to whom he promised that he would dwell in the cave. When the Baptist appeared to the abbot, he said to him, "I am John the Baptist, and I bid thee that thou depart not from hence, for this narrow cave is greater than Mount Sinai, for into it our Lord Jesus Christ often entered when He visited me. Promise me therefore to dwell here, and I will restore thee to health." "When the old man heard this, he willingly promised to dwell in the cave; and forthwith he was healed; and he abode there unto his life's end. Moreover, he made that cave a church, and gathered brethren together there. And the name of the place was called Sapsas."

Saying, Repent ye, &c. John went into the desert, and there did penance, and led an austere life that he might be a fitting preacher of repentance. S. Gregory Nazianzen strove to imitate

John when he says, "The office, or rather the service of John, I strive to undertake, and though I am not the Forerunner, yet I come from the desert." For Gregory went apart with S. Basil into the wilderness of Pontus, and there led a hard life, and then, being filled with the Spirit, he came forth like another Baptist to preach repentance. This was the theme, this the sum of the Baptist's preaching, *Repent;* because well-nigh all were grievous sinners, living in vices and lusts, therefore repentance was necessary, that they might receive the grace and righteousness of Christ.

Moreover, repentance is not only amendment of manners, and the beginning of a new life, as the heretics say, but it is a detestation, chastisement, and destruction of the old sinful life, for the new life cannot effectually be begun, unless the old life be cast away. Whence the *Interlinear Gloss* thus expounds: "Let every man punish the evils of his former life, because salvation shall come nigh, and the opportunity of returning thither from whence we have fallen." S. Augustine (*lib. de Pœniten.*) says, "He cannot begin the new life who does not repent of the old." "To repent is to weep over sins past, and not to commit what has been wept over. He who truly repents, chastises in himself his past errors, and lifts up his mind to heavenly things. And this virtue is born of holy fear, and is called *pœnitentia,* penance, from the Latin *puniendo,* punishing."—*Gloss.*

Whence Ausonius sings of penitence:

> "A goddess I, who punishment exact of things amiss,
> Metanœa I, from penitence I wiss."

S. Gregory (*Hom.* 34, *in Evangel.*) says, "Penitence is the bewailing past sins, and the abstaining from doing that which you have bewailed." The Hebrew נחם *hinnachem* has the same meaning; viz., to repent and grieve over the past. Whence God, when He saw the men whom He had created rushing into wickedness, repented Him that He had made man upon the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart; and He said, "I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth."

Wherefore the Hebrew Gospel, attributed to S. Matthew by Munster, has, less fully, instead of *hinnachem* and *nechumim*, *i.e.*, "to repent," and "repentance," *teschuba*, *i.e.*, "conversion," or *schuba*, that is, "be converted to the Lord;" for repentance is not merely turning to God, but turning away from sin; also grief, compunction, and satisfaction, as the Apostle teaches (2 Cor. vii. 10), and Joel (ii. 12), "Turn unto me with all your heart, and with weeping and fasting and mourning." Whence it is plain that repentance must include three duties—sorrow, a new life, and chastisement of sins—in order to please God.

For the kingdom of heaven, &c. In which God reigns in the faithful, by grace in this life, and in the life to come by glory; and makes them kings and partakers of His eternal kingdom. "John first preached the kingdom of heaven," says the *Gloss*, "which the Jews had never heard of," says S. Chrysostom. And S. Jerome says, "John the Baptist first preaches the kingdom of heaven, that the precursor of the Lord might be honoured with this privilege." Observe, the Jews expected that their kingdom, under King Messiah, would be rich and splendid in their land, such as it was under Solomon. S. John, therefore, and after him Christ and the Apostles, begin their preaching from the kingdom of Messiah, but a kingdom heavenly, not earthly; as though to say, "Now is the time of heaven being opened, which Christ shall shortly open unto you by His death. Repent ye, therefore, for your sins past, correct your lives, be changed for the better, that ye may be meet to be taken by Him into His kingdom. Behold, now is the accepted time foretold by Isaiah, now is the day of salvation, the day when heaven, which has been shut for 4,000 years, is opened, and they who will may enter into it, if indeed they will walk in the path which Christ has pointed out, the path of faith, hope, and charity, and a heavenly life, and enter into the spiritual kingdom of the Church militant, which shall have its joyful consummation in the Church triumphant." Thus Theophylact and Jansen. Franc. Lucas says, "The kingdom of heaven is the dominion of Christ, both over the holy angels and the com-

pany of those men whose rightly ordered life on earth is obedient to God ruling from heaven."

For this is he, &c. I have commented at length upon this in Isaiah xl. 6, and will not here repeat.

S. John was the voice of God, 1. Announcing that Christ was about to come. 2. Pointing out that He was now born, and inviting men to repent and prepare for the grace of Christ. "By the expression, *crying*, the strength of his preaching is denoted," says Raban. Aptly says Bede, "God, indeed, cried by means of others, but He Himself is the only Voice, because He shows the present Word." "Prepare therefore the way of the Lord," is the same as, "Repent ye;" as though "Arouse ye, O Jews, and ye, O inhabitants of the world, as many as ye be; Christ is about to come, and to be installed as Messiah, your King. Make smooth your ways, as is wont to be done for monarchs; take away all things which can offend or dishonour Him, that Christ may be freely and with longing received by all; that, indeed, each may prepare their hearts and minds, by thorough repentance, for the faith and grace of Christ and every kind of holiness."

The same John, &c. Not the flowing robe, commonly called camelots, as Chrytræus, and those luxurious innovators, who magnificently adorn themselves in the pulpits like the suitors of Penelope. For Christ commends John for the roughness of his clothing. Matt. xi. 8.) John fled from the halls of Herod, and retired into the desert, and preferred a hovel to a palace. His garment was cheap, rugged, hairy, and made of sackcloth. 'Yea," say S. Chrysostom and others, "the clothing of his body spoke of the virtue of his soul." Eusebius of Emissa (*Hom.* 1 *de Joan. Bapt.*) says that John's raiment was made of camel-hair sackcloth, since Syria abounds in camels. By this means he tamed his flesh in his youth, like as S. Paul says, "I chastise my body, and bring it under servitude, lest after I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." (1 Cor. ix., Vulg.) For sackcloth, by its hairs and pointed bristles, pricking the flesh all over as with little needles, mortifies it greatly, and restrains its lusts,

as they know who have made trial of it. Hence S. Ægidius, one of the first companions of S. Francis, being asked why S. John, who had not sinned, led so austere a life, and did penance, replied, "As flesh is seasoned with salt, that it may not corrupt, so was the body of the Baptist seasoned with penance." "Penance," as S. Cyprian says (*Serm. de ratione Circumcisionis*), "is that penetrating salt which dries up the rankling putrescencesof the flesh." Hence, SS. Hilarion, Anthony, Paul, Pachomius, and the rest of the Anchorites, according to the testimony of S. Jerome and others, were clothed in hair shirts, or sackcloth, such as the Capuchins wear now, and such as was worn by Elijah, Elisha, and the other prophets, as I have shown in my Preface to the Minor Prophets. In truth, God made for Adam not fine linen or woollen tunics, but coats of skin, and rough ones, that by them, as by a hair shirt, he might tame his flesh and do penance for his sin, as I have shown in Genesis. That is a wise saying of Augustus Cæsar in Suetonius, "Soft and splendid clothing is the banner of pride and a seed plot of luxury." S. Ephrem concludes his life of S. Abraham the hermit thus, "In all the fifty years of his abstinence he never changed the hair shirt which was his clothing." S. Clare wore for twenty-eight years, even in sickness, a hair shirt made of hogs' bristles. When S. Josaphat exchanged a kingdom for the desert, he wore a hair shirt next his skin, under his clothes. (See Damas., *in Histor.* c. 37.) Theodoret says that the emperor, wishing to see S. Abraham the hermit, called him to him, and when he came received him with a salutation, and regarded his rough sackcloth as of more excellence than his own purple. When S. William, Duke of Aquitaine, was converted by S. Bernard, he tamed his flesh with an iron coat of mail, and armed it against temptation. S. Dominic did the same, and was, for that reason, surnamed Loricatus (coated with mail). S. Martin, as Sulpitius testifies, was of opinion that it becomes a Christian to die on ashes; wherefore, he himself, making his bed on ashes, and clothed in sackcloth, so died. SS. Anselm, Charles Borromœo, and many others did the same.

And a leathern girdle, &c. The prophets—indeed, all the Jews and Syrians—wore long robes; to prevent these flowing down to the ground and impeding their walking, they made use of girdles. Thus they were more ready for a journey, and more strong for work. But John had a girdle of skin about his loins, that it might press his sackcloth more closely to his body, and so the more mortify his flesh and subdue it to the Spirit. For in the loins is the origin of lust. S. John was in this a follower of Elias, whose eulogium is that "he was a hairy man, and girt about the loins with a girdle of skin." It is a common saying, "A girded garment, a girded mind; an ungirded garment, an ungirded mind." As it is said in Ecclus. xix. 27, "A man's clothing, and excessive laughter and gait, shew what he is." (See S. Chrysostom *in loc.*) And Cassian (lib. i. *de Habitu Monach.*) thus begins, "So must a monk needs walk as a soldier of Christ, always ready for battle, with his loins alway girded."

His meat, &c. For *locusts* the Greek has ἀκρίδες, which Beza erroneously understands to mean *wild pears*, for they are not called ἀκρίδες, but ἀχράδες. Ἄχρας is a wild pear-tree, a species of thorn. (See Columella, lib. 10.)

A second opinion of certain heretics mentioned by S. Epiphanius, *Hæres.* 30, is also wrong. By ἀκρίδες they understood ἐγκρίδες, or sweetmeats made of oil and honey.

Thirdly, certain innovators take ἀκρίδες to mean *sea-crabs;* but these are not called ἀκρίδες, but ἀχαρίδες, or καρίδες in Athenæus. But where, I ask, could John procure crabs in the desert? Besides, crabs, as crawling on the ground, were forbidden to the Jews.

Fourthly, some by ἀκρίδες translate herbs, or the tops of trees and leaves. The Ethiopian has, *His food was arant anvota*, the tops of herbs with wild honey, or dipped in honey.

But I say ἀκρίδες are *locusts;* so the Vulgate, Syriac, and Arabic. The Egyptian translates *grasshoppers*, but it means locusts, which chirp like grasshoppers. And both are so called because they feed upon τὰ ἄκρα, *i.e.* the tops of ears of corn and plants. So Theocritus, and the Lexicons, *passim*. Whence Origen, Hilary,

Ambrose, Chrysostom, Augustine, understand by the word a kind of leaping insect, which is frequently eaten by the Ethiopians, Libyans, Parthians and other Orientals. (See Pliny, lib. 11, c. 29, and lib. 6, c. 30.) Hence S. Jerome (lib. 2 *contra Jovin.*) says, "Because clouds of locusts are found throughout the vast solitudes of the burning deserts, they are used as food; and this was what John the Baptist ate." So, too, the locust, because it leaps, was counted a clean animal, and was allowed by God to be eaten by the Israelites. (Levit. xi.)

Moreover, the ancients were wont to eat locusts, either sodden or roasted; and when dried in the sun, or salted and smoked, they would keep for a year.

Nothing is here said of John's drink, for it is certain that he drank water only. Indeed there was nothing else to be had in the desert. So the angel said of him, "He shall drink neither wine nor strong drink."

Wild honey. What sort of honey was this? First, Rabanus is of opinion that it was the white and tender leaves of trees, which, when rubbed in the hands, give out a kind of honeyed flavour.

2. Others think that this honey was a moisture collected from the leaves of trees.

3. Suidas thinks it was the gum collected from trees and shrubs, which is called manna.

4. And rightly, S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Isidore of Pelusium, believe that it was wild honey, made by wild bees, which they store in hollow trees, and which has a somewhat bitter and disagreeable flavour. The Ethiopic version has here, *sedenæ*, which means a particular kind of honey, sweeter and more wholesome than the common honey. It is made by a kind of bee, less than the common bee, about the size of a fly.

Then went out to him. *Then*, when the fame of his holy and austere and eremitical life was everywhere spread abroad. Of so great power with all men is sanctity, and the reputation of sanctity.

Now Jordan, in Hebrew, is as though, ירד מן דן *iored min dan*,

that is, descending from Dan. Dan in Hebrew signifies *judgment*. Whence the passage denotes, mystically, that they who fear the judgment of God run to holy preachers, such as was John, that they may learn from them the way of salvation, and thus, in the Day of Judgment, may have their portion in heaven assigned by Christ the Judge.

And were baptized, &c. Unaptly Calvin interprets *were baptized* to mean *were taught the baptism of repentance*. For to baptize does not mean to teach, but to wash the body with water, as is plain from verse 13. The baptism of John was different from the baptism of Christ, as I show against the heretics on Acts xix. 2. The baptism of John was only a sign and protestation of repentance, and a preparation for the baptism of Christ, that they might be justified by it. Hence they were confessing their sins. For repentance, or sorrow for sin, causes a man to confess his sins, and seek for a remedy for them and for pardon. Thus the Jews in certain cases were obliged to confess their sins to a priest, as I have shown on Levit. v. 5, and vi. 6, 7, and Numb. v. 7. But this confession was not a Sacrament, nor did it procure remission of sins, as in the confession instituted by Christ. For in that, as in a Sacrament, the priest, by the power conferred upon him by Christ in ordination, absolves the penitent from his sins. But that confession of the Jews was only a sign of penitence and compunction, or inward contrition, which, if it were perfect, that is to say, proceeding from the love of God above all things, would put away sins and justify. "For charity covereth the multitude of sins." (1 Pet. iv. 8).

But when he saw many, &c. As early as the time of Jonathan, the brother of Judas Maccabæus, there were three sects among the Jews, the Pharisees, the Essenes, and the Sadducees. Josephus (*Ant.* lib. 13, c. 9) thus writes concerning them: "In the time of Jonathan there were three sects, who disagreed among themselves about human affairs. They were the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes. Of these the Pharisees attributed some things, but not all, to fate; and some things they say are in our own

power, so as to be or not to be. The Essenes affirm that all things are in the power of fate; and that nothing can happen to man except by the decree of fate. But the Sadducees altogether deny fate in human affairs. They say that nothing happens because it is fated to happen, and that everything is in our own power; and that we ourselves are the authors of our own happiness or misfortune, according as we follow good or evil counsel." He treats more fully of these sects, *De Bell. Jud.* lib. 2, c. 7, where he says that the Pharisees professed a more accurate knowledge of the rites of the law: the Sadducees denied Providence, and rewards and punishment for the soul after death, which is the only bridle which will restrain from sin; and when it is withdrawn, men rush, like unbridled horses, into all manner of voluptuousness. Whence S. Luke says (Acts xxv. 8), "The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees confess both." For the Sadducees followed the fables of the Greek Sophists and Atheists, and laughed at the Elysian Fields of the Blessed, at Orcus, and Cerberus, and Hell. The Pharisees opposed the Sadducees, following the faith and hope of the ancient Fathers, Abraham, Moses, and the Prophets; and the people were on their side. But on the side of the Sadducees were the nobles, and it would appear, Herod, who lived like an atheist, in all licentiousness and cruelty. When Christ came, both Pharisees and Sadducees conspired against Him, as the common enemy of the Jews. Against the Sadducees the Book of Wisdom was written, and the Second Book of the Maccabees, as I have shown. The Sadducees were so called as though they were just, because they arrogated to themselves the name of justice, from *sadoc*, "justice;" or rather from Sadoc, the name of their founder. The Pharisees were so called as expounders and explainers of the Law, or separated (for the root פרש *parash* signifies to separate, and also to expound) from the common people by their learning and sanctity. Their masters and chiefs were R. Hillel, and Shammai, who S. Jerome says, on the eighth chapter of Isaiah, lived a little before Christ. They were, however, always opposed

to virtue and the truth: whence they are here most severely rebuked by S. John, because they were proud, and puffed up with a vain opinion of their wisdom and sanctity, as well as because they were hypocritical, and, as though ambitious of a feigned holiness, they sought for baptism with the rest, that they might be accounted holy by the people. Thus Origen (tom. 6 *in Joan.*). It may be added that they wished by this means to bind John to themselves, and stop his mouth from speaking of their faults. This is what politicians do at the present day. The Essenes alone, on account of the goodness of their faith and morals, favoured Christ and Christians. Indeed, being made Christians, they became the first monks under S. Mark, as I have shown, on Acts v. 2.

O generation of vipers. This is a Hebraism, meaning, Ye are vipers sprung from vipers, the very evil children of very evil parents, noxious, crafty, and poisonous, who propagate your pernicious morals and errors which you have derived and inherited from your wicked ancestors, in your disciples, as your children, whose souls you kill and destroy. So SS. Jerome and Gregory. For the bite of the viper is so noxious and destructive that it causes death in seven hours, or, at furthest, on the third day. Christ explains John's words, saying (Matt. xxiii. 31), "Ye bear witness against yourselves that ye are the children of them that killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

S. Ambrose, on Luke iii. 7, thinks that the prudence of the Pharisees is here alluded to, according to the words, "Be ye wise as serpents;" for the serpent, by prudence, provides for the future; yet does not its venom leave it. So likewise was it with them: by a certain provident devotion, they took care of the future, and desired the baptism of John; and yet they forsook not their badness and their sins.

Who hath warned you to flee, &c. *To flee*, that is, to *escape*. For *warned*, the Greek has ὑπέδειξεν, signifying—(1), *suggested*, *advised*;

(2), *shown, demonstrated—i.e.*, by reasoning and example. Hence ὑπόδειξις means, *a demonstration.*

The wrath to come does not mean the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, so much as the wrath of Christ the Judge, which He will manifest to the wicked who are condemned in the Day of Judgment. It means the vengeance and sentence of condemnation which He shall then pronounce upon them, as Christ Himself explains. (Matt. xxiii. 33.) It means the wrath and angry countenance of Christ, which shall then so terrify the wicked, that "they shall say to the mountains, Fall upon us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of their wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" (Apoc. vi. 16.) S. John the Baptist was a true preacher of the kingdom of heaven, promising it to those who repent, but a preacher likewise of the wrath of God and of hell, with these threatening the impenitent, such as were the Pharisees and Sadducees. Let the true preacher do the same, as Isaiah did (ii. 19), and Hosea (x. 8), and Christ Himself (Luke xxiii. 30).

The meaning of the whole is clear and plain. Who hath shown, or pointed out (*demonstravit*, Vulg.) that ye shall escape the coming wrath? That is, the judgment of an angry Christ, and everlasting damnation. For so Christ Himself explains John, when He threatens the same Scribes and Pharisees with Gehenna, saying, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how shall ye escape the damnation of hell?" That is to say, "By no means shall ye be able to escape that condemnation; but of a very surety ye shall fall into it, because ye are a generation of vipers; *i.e.*, ye have your malignity and hypocrisy so long a time in you, and so confirmed by practice, that ye cannot be torn away from them, because ye do not wish to be. As dissemblers do ye draw nigh to me, as though ye repented, when either ye do not believe in God's providence, wrath, and vengeance, like the Sadducees; or, if ye do believe in them, ye believe as the Pharisees do; ye fear them not, but proudly think that ye are righteous." So John

gravely rebukes them. "Who hath promised you that ye shall escape hell? False is your persuasion, O ye Sadducees! There is a hell. Most vain, likewise, is your presumption and security, O ye Pharisees! in that ye are not afraid of hell, because ye proudly esteem yourselves righteous." The emphasis is on the word ὑπέδειξεν. "Ye live securely, and are asleep in your lusts, just as if there were no vengeance of God, and punishment of wickedness after this life, or at least as if they need not be apprehended by you. Whence is that security of yours, whence that ὑπόδειξις, that demonstration, that proof, that suggestion? It comes from no sure and evident reason. It comes only from your own pride and foolish persuasion." Jansen and Franc. Lucas give another turn to the words. They think they are the expression of John's rebuke of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Sadducees, as though he said, "I do not believe that ye are approaching my baptism in sincerity: for who could have pointed out to you that by my baptism of repentance, the coming wrath of God might be escaped, when either, like the Sadducees, ye do not believe in that wrath, or else do not fear it, like the Pharisees? For to the unbelieving and the arrogant, nothing can be demonstrated or persuaded which goes contrary to their own opinion or their pride. Wherefore ye do not repent *ex animo*, but ye pretend that ye are fleeing from the anger of God."

Maldonatus has another opinion. He thinks that these are the words of John admiring so great and so sudden conversion of the Sadducees and Pharisees. "Who hath demonstrated to you that ye should fear the judgment of God and hell fire, which aforetime ye either did not believe, or else did not fear? Whence comes so great a change in you?" "Not surely from yourselves, but from the mighty grace and operation of God," says S. Chrysostom, "and from your evil conscience, which accuses you of your guilt, and compels you to fear the judgment of God."

Tropologically, S. Bernard teaches that coming (Gr. μελλούσης) wrath must be escaped by present wrath, *i.e.*, by penance, which a man imposes upon himself, or accepts when imposed upon him

by God. "What, O miserable ones! hath pointed out to you to flee from the coming wrath? Why do ye so greatly flee from the present wrath, when by it ye may escape that which is to come? Why do ye fear the scourge? Why decline the rod? These are the things which in this your day belong unto your peace, if ye would but know it. You only change, you do not escape penance. For it cannot be that the wicked shall go unpunished. He who is not punished here of his own will, shall be punished elsewhere without end. A wretched exchange indeed, and a token of the extreme of madness, is that exchange by which ye would decline temporal affliction, and choose the eternal anguish prepared for the devil. The sinner who would avoid the rod of the correcting Father, will fall into the everlasting punishment of God the Judge."

Bring forth therefore, &c. Gr. καρπὸν ἄξιον, *worthy fruit*, in the singular. Worthy fruit of penance. Observe that the genitive *of penance* is governed by the word *fruit*, as well as by the word *worthy*. The Baptist teaches the way and the means of escaping the wrath to come, that it is present repentance, but it must be *worthy penance*, that is to say, true, serious, and condign or suitable. "Because ye, O Sadducees, do not believe the providence of God, and the anger which shall overtake the wicked in hell; and because ye, O ye Pharisees, do not fear that anger because ye trust in your own works that ye are righteous, therefore shall ye both fall into that hell. And therefore, that ye may both escape it, do penance, and change your lives. Do ye, O ye Sadducees, exchange your faithless atheism for belief in Divine Providence: do ye, O ye Pharisees, exchange your pride for humility, your gluttony for abstinence, your lust for chastity, your covetousness for almsdeeds, your outward Pharisaic righteousness and the boast of it for Christian and inward holiness. Bring forth such fruits as truly become penance, as indicate serious repentance, such as proceed from the heart of a true penitent. They are tears, detestation and punishment of sin: they are the conversion of life and conduct." (See S. Gregory, *Hom.* 20 *in Evang.*)

Let me add that *worthy* penance is that in which the measure of grief and pain corresponds to the measure of the pleasure and the sin, that according to the enormity of the sin should be the increase of punishment. A far heavier penance should be that of the adulterer than of the thief, of the parricide than of the manslayer. Whence, in the Penitential Canons, penances are justly decreed and measured out to every kind of sin. Justly, I say, having regard to the crimes and to man, not with respect to God. For one single mortal sin, inasmuch as it is an offence against God, and because thereby the sinner implicitly places his chief good and end in the creature, which he loves so as to prefer it to God, and so takes away from the honour of the Deity, such sin is therefore as it were Deicide and Christicide, and so contains within it an infinity of wickedness. For it is an offence and an injury against God, who is immense and infinite. Wherefore by no punishment or penance of any creature whatsoever can just and adequate satisfaction be made to God. Yea, even if all men and all angels were, of their own accord, to endure all the torments of hell for all eternity, they could never offer worthy penance and satisfaction to God for a single mortal sin. Christ alone can do this, inasmuch as He is the Son of God, and very God. His penance, therefore, and satisfaction, as regards His Person, which is of infinite dignity, are likewise of infinite value, and are equal and adequate to the infinite offence committed against an infinite God. Such is the sinfulness of sin, which if men thoroughly perceived, surely they would sin no more.

Lastly, he brings forth worthy fruits of repentance, who, when he is converted, serves the truth with as much zeal as before he served the devil and vanity; and loves God as fervently as before he loved the world and the flesh. Hear Climacus, how he gives an exact description of penitence: "Penitence is an ever-abiding abandonment of fleshly consolation. Penitence is a willing endurance of all afflictive dispensations. Penitence is the continual framer of scourges for itself. Penitence is the strong source of tribulation for the belly, and the stern rebuker of the sinful soul."

And think not to say, &c. As it were, boast not to say among yourselves, to think, and flatter yourselves as relying on the thought, that ye have Abraham for your father. For the Jews were accustomed to confide and boast in this, that they were sons of Abraham. This was their reply to Christ, "We be Abraham's seed." It was this vain-glorious boast of theirs which S. John here denounced. And the sense is this: "Abraham was a most holy patriarch and a friend of God, to whom God promised blessing and salvation, which was to be handed down to his children. Now we are sons of Abraham, and therefore heirs of these promises. Let us live therefore as we please, and refuse all worthy penance, yet shall we be saved by this, that we are the children of Abraham. God is faithful to His promises, that what He hath promised He will surely perform. Were it not so, Abraham would be defrauded of his sons, and of their salvation promised by God; and the race of Abraham would come to an end." John answers as S. Paul does (Rom. ix.), that the sons of Abraham, the heirs of the blessing and salvation promised to him, are not reckoned by carnal generation, but by faith and virtue, which are spiritual things. Insomuch that not those are counted sons of Abraham who are born of Abraham, but those who imitate the faith and holiness of Abraham. Wherefore even if the Sadducees and Pharisees, and the rest of the Jews, were to fall from righteousness and salvation, God would bring others in their place, and give them to be as it were children unto Abraham and successors to his blessings. "So that, although ye should perish, O ye Jews, the blessings promised to the seed of Abraham will not perish, but will be transferred from you, who are unworthy, to those who are worthy, viz., the Gentiles."

God is able, &c. John was preaching and baptizing in Bethabara, *i.e.*, the *house of the passage*, where the children of Israel, under Joshua, passed over Jordan dryshod. Wherefore in memory of this great miracle Joshua set up in this place twelve stones, taken from the bed of Jordan. Remigius and S. Anselm think that S. John here spoke of and pointed out those very stones. So also

does Pineda. These stones were types and figures of the Gentiles, buried beneath the waves of error and ignorance, but at length raised up by Christ and His Apostles from the lowest pit of idolatry into the Church by baptism, to the glory of being sons of God.

You will ask, how can this be true? For how can sons of stones become sons of Abraham now dead? And even if stones were raised up and endowed with life, how could they be born of Abraham? Many here betake themselves to allegory, but I say that the words are true in their plain meaning as they stand. 1. Because God is able of stones to form men, whom He, by His will and intention, could reckon to Abraham for sons, or whom Abraham might adopt, just as God was able to form Adam out of the ground, and from barren Sara to produce Isaac unto Abraham. S. John seems to allude to Isaiah li.: "Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged," *i.e.*, as he goes on to explain, "Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sara that bare you." 2. Physically and precisely. As God turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt, so is He able to turn stones into men, and children born of Abraham. Yea, God, by His infinite power, is able wholly to transmute any created substance whatsoever into any other substance, and that either as regards matter or as regards form. For it suffices for a real transformation that the accidents only should remain the same, as is the case in transubstantiation, where the whole substance of the Bread of the Eucharist is converted into the Body of Christ.

S. John compares the Sadducees and Pharisees to stones, both that he might signify their hardness and obstinacy in evil, as well as humble their pride. As though he said, "O ye swelling Pharisees, of yourselves ye are no better than stones; and that wherein ye are more excellent than stones ye have from God. It was God who made you children of Abraham, and if ye be proud He will blot you out from the family of Abraham, and will raise up others in your place, and those even of stones if it so please Him.

Lastly, God is able to turn any stones whatsoever into men, and endow them with the faith and piety of Abraham, and so make them spiritual children of Abraham. For, as the Apostle says (Rom. ix. 7), "Not they who are sons of the flesh are sons of God, but they who are sons of the promise are counted for the seed"—*i.e.*, are reckoned as the seed and sons of Abraham. Whence, mystically, God raised up out of stones children unto Abraham, when he made Gentiles—who were rough and unpolished, and who worshipped stocks and stones, and were on that account likened unto stones by David (Ps. cxv. 8)—to become sons of Abraham by imitation of his faith, piety, and obedience. For he is the father of believers and of the just. So SS. Jerome, Hilary, Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory (*Hom.* 10), and all the ancient Fathers. Euthymius adds that there was a fulfilment at Christ's Passion, when many who were hard of heart, seeing the rocks rent and other miracles, repented and believed in Christ.

For now is the ax, &c. Here is another stimulus wherewith John pricks the Pharisees to do penance, and that speedily, threatening them, indeed, with the peril of being cut down, and burnt up in hell. So S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and others. Of these Euthymius says, "The axe is compared to death, the tree to man." That is why the Greek is ἐκκόπτεται, *is* cut down, and βάλλεται, *is* cast into the fire—meaning it is upon the very point and verge of being cut down. "Your fate, therefore, O ye Pharisees, hangs as it were upon a razor's edge. The extreme of peril hangs over you; destruction, death, and hell are gaping for you. Therefore bring forth worthy fruits of penance, that ye may escape those things." The meaning is, the axe—that is, the vengeance and judgment of God—is laid to the roots of the trees—that is, to the life of each individual—that if they be unfruitful, as up to this present time is your case, O ye Sadducees and Pharisees, it may speedily cut them down by death, and cast them into the eternal fire. But it, on the other hand, they be fruitful, and produce repentance and good works, it shall in a little while, not so much cut them down as transfer and transplant them to the

celestial paradise, where they shall produce the perennial fruits of eternal felicity, glory and praise.

You may say, Surely this was true before the coming of Christ Why, then, saith John, after His coming, "*Now* is the axe laid," &c.? I answer, because all this is more clear and sure since the coming of Christ. For Christ for this very purpose came into the world, that as the Judge, King, and Lord of all men, He might translate those who believe in and obey Him to heaven, and punish the unbelieving and disobedient with present and eternal death. Therefore Christ, by Himself, by His Apostles, and by John, clearly preached and promised to the pious the kingdom of heaven, and threatened the wicked with hell, that they might know that in His hand is their salvation and their damnation, and that by turning to Him they might escape hell, and be put into the way for heaven; and that He was able immediately to do all this, and that He would shortly do it, since there was no longer any excuse of ignorance or infirmity for men, as there was to the uninstructed Jews before Christ, to whom present and temporal rewards and punishments, not future and eternal, were promised and threatened by Moses and the prophets.

Secondly, and more aptly, the axe is the judgment and vengeance of Christ, the King and the Judge, wherewith He will cut off not only noxious, but unfruitful trees—that is, the Jews—from the garden of the Church, and from the salvation and the blessing promised to Abraham and his children, and cast them into the eternal fire; and shall, in their stead, plant the Gentiles who believe in Him in the paradise of His Church, which is, as it were, the estate and heritage of Abraham, who is the father of all them that believe. John therefore threatens the Pharisees with the reprobation of the Jews, and intimates the calling of the Gentiles into their place, which was shortly afterwards accomplished by Christ; for He rejected the Pharisees and the Jews from the family of Abraham—that is, from the Church of the faithful, and consequently from the kingdom of God.

I indeed baptize you, &c. These words must not be connected

with what precedes, nor were they spoken immediately afterwards by John. But they were spoken as suitable to an occasion of which S. Luke gives an account and explanation (iii. 16): "While all the people were in expectation, and were musing in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not, John answered them all and said, I indeed baptize you with water, but he that is mightier than I cometh after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." From the sanctity of his life and the fervour of his preaching, and from his baptizing, the people suspected that John was the Messiah, or the Christ. For none of the other prophets, except John and Ezekiel, had made use of baptism. (See Ezek. xxxvi., where he foretold that baptism would be a sign of Christ: "I will pour clean water upon you, and ye shall be cleansed from all your filthiness.") John therefore puts an end to this suspicion, and declares that he is not the Christ, but the forerunner and indicator of Christ, and that his baptism was a prelude to the baptism of Christ, and a preparation for it.

So he says, "I indeed baptize you in," or "with water," that is, withwater only. This is a Hebraism, for the Hebrews denote the instrument by the preposition or letter ב, or *in*, which is understood in Latin. So the Hebrew said במים *bammayim* "in," or "with water, unto repentance," that I may stir you up to repentance, and that I may prepare you by corporeal ablutions for the washing of the soul to be received in the baptism of Christ. The baptism of John therefore was a profession of penance. Whence those who were about to be baptized by him confessed their sins, not that there was thereby a condonation of their faults; for this they were to wait for from Christ, by means of His baptism and true contrition.

He that cometh after me. Gr. ὁ ἐρχόμενος, *i.e.*, *the coming One*, He whose advent is at hand, who is nigh us, even at our doors.

Mightier than I. Gr. ἰσχυρότερος, *i.e.*, *stronger, more powerful, more excellent*, and who in gifts far excels me. For He is mighty by His own divine and heavenly strength, wherewith He influences

not only the body, as I do, but the soul by the Spirit of His grace, and purifies it from every spot of sin. Whence Isaiah (chap. ix.) among other titles of Christ gives him that of *strong*. "He shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Strong God." (Vulg.) "And verily was He Strong, who, by the wonderful power of His Divinity, overcame the devil, and took his prey out of his hand, and overthrew his kingdom and transferred it to Himself; who opened the doors of heaven, and swallowed up death in victory; who abolished sin, and brought in grace and glory." (Toletus.)

Again, Christ was mightier than John in miracles, because by a single word He raised the dead, drove out demons, healed the sick, changed the elements, whilst John by penance tamed the flesh that he might subdue it under the Spirit. Thus was the strength of Christ the weakness of John.

Whose shoes, &c. Mark adds (i. 7) "falling down." S. Luke has "Whose shoes' latchet I am not worthy to unloose." Each is true, each denotes the menial office of servants, who kneel down, and put on or take off their master's shoes, and carry his shoes, when he puts on his slippers. John therefore here confesses that he is the servant and slave of Christ, that Christ is his Lord, yea his God.

Mystically, shoe denotes Christ's Humanity, which to serve, by carrying it on his shoulders, or bearing it in his hand, he acknowledges himself unworthy. For this humanity, by union with the Word, was of boundless dignity and majesty. Whence S. Bernard: "The majesty of the Word was shod with the shoe of our humanity." For since shoes are worn upon the extremities of the body, and are made of dead animals, according to S. Gregory and S. Jerome they rightly signify the Incarnation of Christ. By shoes Theoplylact understands Christ's coming down to the earth, and descent after death into the *Limbus Patrum*.

He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost. Christ shall pour forth the Holy Spirit, with all His gifts, in such abundance upon you, that He shall wash you from all your sins, and fill you, and, as it

were, overwhelm you with grace and charity, and His other *charismata*. Christ did this visibly at Pentecost. When He was about to ascend into heaven, alluding to these words of John, He said to His Apostles, "John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." (Acts i. 5.) But invisibly He does it in the sacrament of baptism, and confirmation, which is, as it were, the perfection and consummation of baptism. The contrast, therefore, between John and Christ is this—John baptized with water only, but Christ with water and the Holy Ghost. John washed the body, Christ the soul. And as the soul excels the body, so does the baptism of Christ excel the baptism of John, which was only rudimentary. So the Council of Trent (*Sess.* 7 *Can.* 1), and the Fathers generally. Hence Doctors speak of a threefold baptism—1, of the river; 2, of breath; 3, of blood. The baptism of the river is when any one is baptized with water. Of wind, or spirit (*flaminis sive spiritûs*, Lat.), when a catechumen in a prison, or a desert, where there is no water, is truly contrite for his sins, and wishes for baptism. For such a one is justified by contrition, which includes the desire of baptism. Of blood, when any one not baptized dies a martyr for the faith; for he is baptized in his own blood, and cleansed from all his sins.

With the Holy Ghost and with fire. So it is in all the Greek, Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Persian, Egyptian, and Ethiopic versions. It is as though the Baptist said, "My baptism is by water, Christ's by fire; and as fire is more powerful than water, so is His baptism more efficacious than mine." Certain heretics, called Hermiani and Seleuciani, were wont, for this reason, to baptize their converts with fire, as S. Augustine testifies (*Hæres.* 59).

You ask, what is this fire? 1. Origen (*Hom.* 24 *in Luc.*) understands it of a purgatorial fire, that Christ will cleanse His faithful, dying in venial sins, in the fire of purgatory, according to the words, "The fire shall try every one's work;" and, "He shall be saved, yet so as by fire." (1 Cor. iii.) So also Suarez out of SS. Jerome and Bede.

2. S. Hilary by fire here understands the judgment of Christ, that it will be sharp, clear, and dreadful, like fire.

3. S. Basil (on Isaiah, chap. iv.), Damascene (lib. 4 *de Fide*, c. 10), and Toletus, understand the fire of hell, by which Christ punishes the reprobate; whence the Baptist says, "He shall burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

4. Some by fire understand *tribulations*, by which, as by fire, Christ washes His faithful people from their sins.

5. And, correctly, by the Holy Ghost and fire is meant the Holy, Fiery, and Inflaming Spirit, who is fire—that is, like fire—and, as fire, burns, and kindles. It is a hendiadys. The Holy Ghost, as it were fire, purges the faithful from their sins, kindles and illuminates them, raises them towards heaven and strengthens them, unites them closely to Himself, and, like fire, transforms them into Himself. Hence, at Pentecost, the Holy Ghost glided down upon the Apostles in the appearance of tongues of fire. Hence S. Chrysostom: "By adding the mention of fire, he signified the efficacy of the Holy Ghost, the vehement and unconquerable strength of His grace." Hence, in the primitive Church, the Holy Spirit was often wont to descend in the visible appearance of fire upon those who were baptized and confirmed, to denote the complete purgation of their sins, and the fiery love and the words of fire with which the Holy Ghost inflamed them. According to that in Deut. iv. 24, "God is a consuming fire;" and, in Jer. xxiii. 29, "Are not my words as fire? saith the Lord."

Whose fan, &c. The fan is that with which farmers winnow the corn which has been thrashed, in order that the wind may carry away the chaff, and leave only the good corn behind. Fan, in Greek, πτύον, that which, as it were, spits forth the chaff. It is derived from πτύω, *to spit out*. The fan denotes the judgment of Christ, by which, as the fan separates the wheat from the chaff, He separates the good from the bad. The *floor* here does not signify the place, but rather the corn collected in the floor, which is cleansed by the separation of the chaff. By metonymy, that

which contains is put for the contents. The *floor*, then, denotes the Church, or the company of the faithful.

The Fanner is Christ the Judge; the fan is His judgment, by which he fans and examines the thoughts, words, and deeds of every one. The chaff are the wicked. The wheat are the just and the saints, whom He will gather into His barn, the kingdom of heaven, where with them, as with wheat, He will feed and delight the Holy Trinity, the Angels, and all the Church triumphant.

John rises from Christ's first advent of grace to His second advent of judgment. And he signifies that this judgment is pressing on, and is nigh at hand, by saying, "His fan is in His hand." So S. Ambrose on Luke iii. 14. For although many hundred years may yet elapse before the judgment day, yet all those years, if compared with eternity, are but as a very little while, or as nothing. Moreover Christ, the Lord and Judge, holds in His hand the spirit, soul, and life of all men, to take them away if He will, to judge, bless, or condemn them.

He will burn up, &c. And if the chaff, how much more the tares? The wicked are here called chaff, because, like chaff, they are very light, worthless and useless, and good for nothing save for fuel of Gehenna. For unquenchable, the Greek has ἀσβέστῳ, *unextinguished, eternal*. Hence a stone which always burns is called *asbestus*. The figure of speech here used is miosis, for little is said, much is meant. The fire of hell is ἄσβεστος inextinguishable, not only because it cannot be quenched, but because it does not consume the wicked whom it burns; nay, it excruciates them living and feeling with endless torments. The error of Origen is here condemned, who thought that the pains of hell would not be eternal, but after the completion of the great cycle of Plato would come to an end.

There is an allusion to Isaiah lxvi. 24, "Their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched;" and xxxiii. 14, "Who among us can dwell with the devouring fire? Who shall dwell in everlasting burnings?" Where see what I have said. S. Chrysostom gives examples. "Do you not discern that sun which

ever burns and is never extinguished? Have you not read of the inanimate bush, which was burnt with fire, and not consumed?" And S. Austin (*contra Donatist.* lib. post Collat. c. 9) says, "Now I have proved sufficiently, that there are animals, which are called *Piraustæ* because they can live in the fire, and be burnt without being consumed, in pain without death, by the marvellous power of the Creator. And if any deny that this is possible, they are ignorant of Him by whom whatsoever is wonderful in all nature is effected."

Think of, then, and dread this fire of hell, which no water, no tears can extinguish: yea, though all rivers, all abysses, all seas, were collected together, they could not quench it: which all demons, all creatures, with all their powers, could not even diminish in the very least degree, "because the breath of the LORD as a stream of brimstone doth kindle it."

Then cometh Jesus, &c. *Then*, when the Baptist was stirring up all to repentance, and baptizing as a preparation for receiving the grace of Christ, *then*, I say, Christ came, that Him whom he had commended when absent, he might point out being present, even as the day-star goes before and indicates the rising of the sun.

From Galilee, or as S. Mark says from Nazareth, where he had lived with His mother in a private station until He was thirty years of age. Then He came to John, that He might be by him declared to be the Messiah, that is, the Teacher and Redeemer of the world: and that He might, upon John's testimony, inaugurate His public office of teaching, and bringing in the Evangelical Law, for which He had been sent by the Father.

To be baptized. You will ask, what were the causes of John's preaching and baptism, and why did Christ wish to be baptized by him? There was a threefold reason, says S. Jerome. 1. That because He was born a man, he might fulfil all the righteousness and humility of the law. 2. That He might give a sanction to John's baptism. 3. That sanctifying the waters of Jordan by the descent of the Dove, He might show the coming of the Holy Ghost to the laver of the faithful.

4. A fourth reason was that by the Holy Spirit's coming down upon Christ in the form of a dove, and by the Father thundering from heaven, He might afford Himself an irrefragable testimony. So S. Jerome.

5. Christ, by receiving baptism from John, would allure all men to His own Baptism, and would show them its benefit, viz. the coming and gift of the Holy Ghost.

6. Christ took our sins upon Him. Therefore as guilty and a penitent He stood before John, that He might wash away and cleanse our sins in Himself. Whence Nazianzen says (*Orat. in sancta luminaria*), "John baptizes, and Jesus comes to him, sanctifying even him who baptizes, that especially He may bury the old Adam in the waters." And again, "Jesus ascended up out of the water, drawing and lifting up with Himself a drowned world."

7. That Christ, who had determined to found the new commonwealth of Christians, in which none should be admitted except by baptism, should Himself, their Chief, be baptized, that He might in all things except sin, be made like unto His brethren. That is a famous saying of Cato, "Submit to the law, which thou thyself hast enacted."

8. As Abraham formerly, by God's command, instituted the sign of circumcision, so Christ would give a new pledge to His Church by sanctioning baptism. Thus S. Thomas thinks (3 *p.*, *q.* 66, *art.* 2) that when Christ was baptized, He instituted the Sacrament of Baptism, not in words, but in deed. For then there appeared all the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, in whose name we are baptized. The Father was manifested by His Voice, the Son appeared in Jordan, the Holy Ghost was seen in the form of a Dove.

But it is more correct to say that Christ when He was baptized only directed attention to His own Sacrament, and its matter, water; but that He instituted it shortly afterwards, when He began to preach publicly. For He does not seem to have instituted Baptism publicly at the time He said to Nicodemus coming to Him privately and by night, "Except any one be born of water

and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." And this is the opinion of S. Chrysostom, S. Augustine (*Serm.* 36 & 37, *de Tempore*), S. Gregory Nazianzen (*Orat. in S. Nativit.*), and others, who at the same time assert that Christ by His Baptism sanctified all water, and by His corporeal contact with it endued it with regenerating power, not as though He infused into water any physical, but only a moral quality, because water was then, *ipso facto*, by the intention of Christ, designed for the sanctification of men by washing them in the Sacrament of Baptism.

Tropologically, Christ by His Baptism at this time wished to teach us that a holy and perfect life must begin with baptism, and that this should be the great object of all who teach others, such as doctors and preachers.

But John forbad him. John recognized Christ by a secret instinct and revelation of God, by which he knew Him as to his face, which he had seen and known thirty years before, when he leapt in his mother's womb for joy. You may ask, "Why then was there a sign given to the Baptist (John i. 33) by which he was to recognize Christ, viz., the descending and abiding of the Holy Ghost upon Him?" I reply, This sign was given to the Baptist, not that he should for the first time know Christ, but that it should more fully confirm him in that faith and knowledge, and that by the same, as by a sure testimony of God, he should point out and commend Christ to the people.

I have need to be baptized, &c. That is, to be spiritually washed from my sins, and perfected by the Spirit of Thy grace. *Have need* here does not signify an obligation of precept, as though the Baptist was obliged to receive the baptism of Christ. For this precept of baptism was given and promulged by S. Peter on the Day of Pentecost, and therefore after John's death. Some gather from this place that John was soon afterwards baptized by Christ Himself, as were also the Blessed Virgin Mary, SS. Peter, James, and John, and the rest of the Apostles. This is stated by S. Evodius, who succeeded S. Peter in the Chair of Antioch, in an Epistle of his, entitled τὸ φώς.

In favour of this idea are also Nazian. (*Orat.* 39 towards the end); "Christ knew," he says, "that He would Himself shortly afterwards baptize the Baptist; also S. Chrysostom, who says, "John baptized Christ with water, but Christ baptized John with the Spirit." Whence the author of the *Imperfect Comment.* says, "It is plainly written in apocryphal writings, that John baptized Christ with water, but He baptized John with the Spirit."

Abulensis thinks, on the other hand, that John was not baptized by Christ. And he proves it by the marvelling of John's disciples, who soon afterwards told John that Christ, whom he had baptized, was Himself baptizing, and that all men were coming unto Him. For this would have been needlessly told to John if he had been baptized by Christ, and he would have given this reply to his disciples. So that it is a doubtful point whether John was baptized by Christ or not.

And Jesus answering said, &c. It becometh *us*, *i.e.*, Me to receive, thee to confer, baptism. Others understand *us* in this way: "It behoves us who are teachers to set an example in ourselves. Nothing, however apparently unimportant, must be omitted. I shall institute baptism. It is the part of him who commands, to do before others what he commands." Whence S. Luke says of Christ (Acts i. 1), "Jesus began both to do and to teach." "This is righteousness," saith S. Ambrose, "that what you wish another to do, you should yourself first begin, and encourage others by your own example." Whence S. Gregory, "Of true humility is ever sprung secure authority.

Moreover, not only Christ receiving, but John conferring baptism fulfilled all righteousness, because, contending in humility with Christ, he suffered himself to be vanquished, by being as it were put upon an equality with Christ. And so he, as it were, being vanquished by Christ in humility, vanquished Christ by yielding to Him and obeying Him. As S. Dominic, wishing to give his right hand to S. Francis, whilst Francis opposed it and strove to take his left, said at length, "You overcome me in humility; I conquer you by obedience."

It is very probable that in the act of baptism John pointed out Christ to the people, since the form of John's baptism would be something of this kind: "I baptize thee in the Name of Him who is to come;" or, "Believe in Messiah who is about to come." This is inferred from chap. xix. 4. Thus it would seem that when Christ came, and was being baptized, John would say, "This is Messias of whom I said that He was about to come."

S. Jerome observes—"Beautifully is it said, 'Suffer it now,' that it might be shown that Christ was baptized with water, and that John was about to be baptized by Christ with the Spirit. And by-and-by Christ might say, 'Thou baptizest Me in water, that I may baptize thee in thine own blood shed for Me.'"

For so it behoveth us to fulfil (Arabic, *to perfect*) *all righteousness.* Instead of *righteousness* the Syriac has *all rectitude, i.e.*, whatever is just, right, holy, and pleasing unto God. And it is not right to decline or depart from such things, even though they seem lowly and abject; and even though they be not provided for by any precept, but are matters of counsel only. But again, *all righteousness* is whatsoever God the Father hath commanded. So Vatabl. For that is righteous which God sanctions and commands. And it would seem that as God the Father commanded Christ to die, so also He gave Him a precept to submit to John's baptism.

Hence, secondly, the *Gloss* says, humility is all righteousness—humility which subjects itself to all—superiors, equals, and inferiors. On the contrary, pride, by which a man prefers himself to all, not only inferiors and equals, but superiors, is all unrighteousness. For it takes away their just rights, and deprives them of the subjection which is their due. For as in every act of righteousness, *i.e.*, of virtue, humility comes in, in that a man submits himself to reason and virtue, so pride mixes itself up with every act of sin, in that a man prefers himself, and his own will and desire, to the law and will of God. Humility therefore fulfils all righteousness, because it is the head of all right and justice which a man owes to God, his neighbour, and himself. He submits himself to God by religion, to his neighbour by charity. He

subjects the body to the soul, the soul to the law of God. Wherefore the humble hath peace with all; the proud with all hath strife and war. At this present day how many lawsuits and contentions are there between clergy and prelates for places, titles, precedence! How both sides pertinaciously contend for what is due to each, to the great scandal of the laity, and with little gain of victory to either side. For what dost thou gain if thou overcomest in the lawsuit, save some small worthless point of honour, and in the meanwhile makest a far greater loss of reputation, peace, and conscience? Learn from Christ, O Christian, to believe in, yea, even to be ambitious of the lowest place, so shalt thou be exalted with Christ and deserve the highest. For Christ, subjecting Himself to John, was declared by John, yea, by all the Holy Trinity, to be greater than John, to be the Son of God. Say, therefore, with Christ, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." S. Ignatius, the founder of our Society, was a follower of Christ when he gave this golden axiom:

> "With e'en the least, let no true Christian fight,
> But still to yield be e'er his chief delight."

For the grace, honour, and glory of a Christian is humility, that is to say, to yield, to suffer himself to be vanquished, to yield the place of honour to another. Wherefore the greater is he who is the humbler. For, as S. Gregory says, "Pride is the place of the wicked, humility the place of the good." Christ here teaches us to follow an ordinary life, not to seek exemption from the common law and lot, and to be accounted as one of the common people, according to the words in Ecclus. iii. 20, "If thou wouldst be famous, be as one of the flock;" yea, descend to the lowest place, and prefer all men to thyself.

3. *All righteousness, i.e.* the highest justice. Thus God says to Moses (Exod. xxxiii. 10), "I will shew thee all," *i.e.* the highest "good" (Vulg.) namely, Myself. For the lowest degree of righteousness is to submit oneself to a superior, the middle degree to submit to an equal, the highest to an inferior, even as Christ

submitted Himself to John. Christ, I say, who is the Holy of Holies, bowed His head to John for baptism, as though seeking from him sanctification and purification, like the rest, who were sinners, who came to his baptism.

Excellently says S. Gregory (3 p. *Pastor. Admonit.* 18), "Let the humble hear that the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; let those who are lifted up hear that pride is the beginning of all sin. Let the humble hear that our Redeemer humbled Himself, being made obedient even unto death; let the proud hear what is written of their head, 'He is a king over all the children of pride.' The pride of the devil was made the occasion of our ruin, the humility of God was found to be the assurance of our redemption. Let the humble therefore be told that when they abase themselves they rise to the likeness of God; but let it be said to the proud that when they lift up themselves they sink down to the likeness of the apostate angel. What then is more base than to be haughty? And what is more exalted than humility; which, while it puts itself in the lowest place, is united to its Maker in the very highest?"

S. Gregory says elsewhere: "This is the highest righteousness and sanctity, when we are in respect of our virtue the loftiest, in respect of our humility the lowliest." S. Thomas Aquinas, being asked by what mark a really holy and perfect person might be known, answered, "By *humility*, by contempt of himself, contempt of honour and praise, by bearing ignominy and reproach." "For if," he said, "you see any one, when he is neglected and despised, and has others preferred before him, show a sense of pain or indignation, to be of a downcast countenance, to turn up his nose, wrinkle his forehead, you may be very sure he is not a saint, even though he should work miracles. For when he is neglected he shows his pride, anger, impatience, and so makes himself vile and contemptible."

4. *All righteousness, i.e.*, every increase of righteousness, that is to say, of virtue and sanctity. Christ indeed could not increase in interior grace, for with that He was always perfectly filled from

the first moment of His Conception and union with the WORD; but He showed daily ever greater and greater signs of virtue, and ever more and more humbled Himself. For Christ came down from heaven into the Virgin's womb, from the womb to the manger, from the manger to Jordan, from Jordan to the Cross, as He would teach us in Ps. lxxxiv. 8: "They shall go from strength to strength: the God of gods shall be seen in Sion." (Vulg.) So S. Augustine (*Epist.* 50, *ad Dioscorum*), "I would, my Dioscorus, that thou shouldst in all piety subject thyself to Christ and the Christian discipline, nor fortify for thyself any other way of reaching and obtaining the truth than that which has been fortified for us by Him who knoweth the infirmity of our footsteps, forasmuch as He is God. And so it is said of that most famous orator Demosthenes, that when he was asked what was the first rule to be observed in oratory, he replied, Pronunciation; and when he was asked what was the second, replied, Pronunciation; and being asked what was the third, still answered, Pronunciation. So if thou shouldst ask and ask again concerning the precepts of the Christian religion, I should answer that nothing else but humility would make you perfectly fulfil their obligations, although, perchance, I might be obliged to speak of other duties. To this most salutary humility, which, that our Lord Jesus Christ might teach us, He humbled Himself, to this, the greatest adversary is, if I may so say, a most uninstructed science."

Lastly, he fulfils all righteousness who endures the unpleasant ways and manners and tempers of others, according to those words of St. Paul, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." He who loves those who hate him, blesses those who curse him, does good to those who injure him, honours those who despise him, vanquishes his enemies by the warmth of his love, who with Paul desires to be anathema for his enemies, and to be all things to all men that he may gain all for Christ, he is truly humble and is like Christ.

Then he suffered him. That is, when he heard this, John yielded and baptized Christ. "If God received baptism from man, no

one need disdain to receive it from his fellow-servant," says S. Jerome. And S. Ambrose says, "Let no one refuse the laver of grace, when Christ refused not the laver of penance." Beautifully, too, says S. Bernard, "John acquiesced and obeyed; he baptized the Lamb of God, and washed Him in the waters; but we, not He, were washed, because, for washing us, the waters are known to be of cleansing power."

S. Augustine (*Serm.* 154 *de Temp.*) says that the day on which Christ was baptized was a Sunday, though John Lucidus (lib. 7, c. 2) was of opinion that the day was Friday. What is certain from tradition is, that Christ was baptized on the 6th day of January, the same day of the month on which he had been adored by the Magi thirty years before. Whence the Church commemorates the event on that day. The Ethiopians on the 6th of January, in memory of Christ's Baptism, not only sprinkle themselves with water, but immerse themselves in it. The faithful in Greece also were accustomed, about midnight before the 6th of January, to draw water from the nearest river or fountain, which, by the gift of God, remained sweet for many years, as S. Chrysostom expressly testifies (*Hom. de Baptism. Christiano*, tom. 5, *Opp. Græc.*). S. Epiphanius (*Hæres.* 51) adds, that on that day the Nile was turned into wine. "About the 11th day of the month Tybus (our 6th of January) Christ's first miracle was wrought in Cana of Galilee, when water was made wine. Wherefore in various places, until this very time, the same thing takes place as a divine sign for a testimony to unbelievers. Various rivers and fountains which are turned into wine are the proof of this. Cibyris, a fount of a city of Caria, becomes wine at the very hour in which Christ said 'Draw out now, and bear to the governor of the feast.' Gerasa in Arabia is another example. I myself have drunk of the fountain of Cibyris, and our brethren of the fount of Gerasa, which is in a temple of the Martyrs. Many testify the same concerning the Nile."

Moreover, that the water of Jordan received by reason of Christ's Baptism in it the gift of incorruption, Gretser testifies.

"Let us add this," he says, "that the waters of Jordan, after Christ had consecrated them by His Baptism in them, have been endowed with the gift of incorruption. That illustrious prince, Nicolas Christopher Radzivil, in his *Hodœporicum Hierosolymit.*, says, "The water of the Jordan is extremely turbid, but very wholesome, and when kept in vessels does not become putrid. This I have found to be the case with some which I have brought with me."

Christ appears to have been baptized and washed by John, not only as to His head, but with respect to the rest of His body. I think so, because such was the manner of the Jews, who were accustomed to denude themselves of their clothes, and undergo their ceremonial baptisms and lustrations naked. Jesus therefore condescended to appear naked before John, and he underwent this indignity for our sakes, that Adam's and our nakedness and shame, induced by sin, He might clothe and cover by His grace. Whence also, as Bede testifies, a church was erected by the faithful on the spot where the clothes of Christ were deposited when He was baptized. Bede adds, that the same place was adorned with a noble monastery and church which was dedicated in honour of John the Baptist.

Gregory of Tours (*lib. de Gloria Martyr.*, c. 17) writes about the same place: "There is a place by Jordan where the Lord was baptized. The water flows into a certain bay, in which, even now, lepers are cleansed. When they be come thither, they wash frequently until they are cleansed from their infirmity. As long as they remain there they are fed at the public expense. When they are cleansed they depart to their own homes. This spot is five miles from where the Jordan loses itself in the Dead Sea."

The place is called in S. John's Gospel Ænon, near to Salim. It was not far from Zarthan and Jericho, where the children of Israel under Joshua passed over on dry ground, that it might be signified that the same Christ, who once led the Israelites over Jordan into the land of promise, will, by baptism, bring His faithful people to heaven. "And as under Joshua the waters were driven back, so under Christ, as our baptized Leader, are our sins turned back,"

says S. Augustine. Again, Elias divided the waters of Jordan when he was about to be taken up into heaven in a chariot of fire, that it might be signified that those who pass through the waters of Christ's baptism shall have an entrance into heaven opened to them by the fire of the Holy Ghost. Thus S. Thomas.

And Jesus, when he was baptized, &c. Luke adds, *Jesus being baptized and praying.* Whence it is plain that not by virtue of John's baptism, but by the merit of Christ's humility and prayer, the heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him.

Straightway. This word is best referred, not to the words *coming up out of the water,* but to *the heavens were opened.*

Lo! the heavens were opened. Mark has, *He saw the heavens opened.* He—that is, Jesus—John too, and others who were present, doubtless saw them, since it was for their sakes this was done. Whence Matthew says, *They were opened, i.e., unto him* or *for him.* This is, they were seen to be opened in His honour, that God might make manifest that heaven is open unto all through Christ, says S. Chrysostom.

Also that the heavenly power of baptism might be pointed out, because by it carnal men become heavenly and spiritual, and by it are called and, as it were, taken by the hand to heaven. So S. Thomas.

You will inquire, in what way were the heavens opened unto Christ? It is replied, it was not the actual substance (*soliditatem,* Lat.) of the sky which was opened and rent in twain, for this is naturally impossible and supernaturally unneeded. Neither were the heavens opened by a merely imaginary vision, as they were opened to Ezekiel (i. 1); but there was in the upper region of the air a hiatus visible to the senses, from which visible aperture both the Dove and the Voice of the Father appeared to come down upon Christ. Such hiatuses appear not unfrequently in the atmosphere, concerning which see Aristotle on meteors.

Hieron. Prado, the Jesuit, on the words *the heavens were opened,* says, "There was an appearance as though the sky were opened and divided by thunders and lightnings, and from the opening the

Father's voice burst forth as thunder. For thunder is always accompanied by lightning; indeed, lightning is the cause of thunder, although the thunder is always heard after the lightning, because sound travels more slowly than light."

And saw (Syriac, *looked up at*) *the Spirit of God descending like a dove* (Egyptian, *in the form of a dove*). You will ask first, was this a true and real dove, or was it only the appearance and likeness of a dove? SS. Jerome, Anselm, and Thomas, Salmeron, and others, think that it was a real dove; and this is probable. It is, however, equally, or rather, more probable that it was not a real dove, but only the shape of a dove, formed by an angel, agitated and moved so that it should descend upon Christ. The reason is that all the Evangelists seem to indicate this. S. Matthew says, *as if a dove;* Mark, *as it were a dove;* John, *like a dove;* Luke, *in a bodily shape like a dove*. There was therefore the appearance and similitude only, not the reality of a dove. Nor was there any need of a real dove, but of its likeness for a symbolical signification, that by such a symbol those gifts of Christ of which I shall speak presently might be designated. In such wise were the heavens opened, not in reality, but in appearance, as I have already said. This was the opinion of S. Augustine, S. Ambrose, S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Lyra, &c.

You will urge, Was it then a phantasm, a merely fancied dove? I reply, By no means. It was a real, solid body, having the form of a dove, as S. Augustine teaches, *de Doctr. Christian.* c. 22; not indeed assumed, hypostatically, by the Holy Spirit, as the Humanity of Christ was assumed by the Word, as Tertullian appears to have thought, *lib. de Carne Christi.*, c. 3. But it was only an index and a symbol of the Holy Ghost. It was thus taken because the dove is a most meek, simple, innocent, fruitful bird, very amiable, but very jealous. Such in like manner is the Holy Ghost, who endowed the soul of Christ at the very moment of His conception with these qualities of meekness and the rest. And what was now done was, by this sign of the dove, to signify that the Holy Ghost had done this, and to declare it to the people publicly.

You will inquire in the next place, why the Holy Ghost descended upon Christ in the form of a dove, upon Apostles in the shape of tongues of fire? S. Chrysostom answers, 1. Because Christ came in the flesh, and into the world, meek like a dove, for the remission of sins, and for the release of sinners. But in the Day of Judgment, He will come as a severe Judge, to punish the wicked. 2. And more literally, the Holy Spirit was given to the Apostles in the likeness of fire, because He endued them with fervour and ardour in preaching. (S. Augustine, *Tract.* 6 *in Joan.*)

Again, the dove represented excellently well the Holy Sevenfold Spirit, or His sevenfold gifts which He poured upon Christ as Isaiah predicted (xi. 2), "And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and godliness, and shall fill him with the spirit of the fear of the Lord." All these gifts are appositely signified by the dove. For as S. Thomas expounds (3 *p.*, *q.* 39, *art.* 6, *ad.* 4), the dove tarries by flowing streams, and when in the waters she beholds the reflection of a hawk she is able to escape it. Here is the gift of wisdom. 2. The dove selects the best grains of corn, and places them by themselves in a heap. Here is the gift of understanding. 3. The dove brings up the young of others. Behold the gift of counsel. 4. The dove does not tear with her beak. Behold the gift of knowledge. 5. The dove is without gall and bile. Lo! the gift of piety or godliness. 6. The dove maketh her nest in the rocks. See the gift of true strength. 7. The dove utters a mournful plaint instead of a song. Behold the gift of fear, wherewith Christ and His saints wail for sins, whether their own, or those of others.

Again, the dove is the symbol of the reconciliation and renewal of the world, which the Holy Spirit has wrought through Christ. Hence His symbol was a dove, bearing a green olive-branch to Noah, signifying that the Deluge and God's anger were at an end.

Lastly, because the dove is an amicable and social bird, it denotes the union of the faithful in the Church, which the Holy Spirit effects through the baptism of Christ. So S. Thomas. In fine, the

dove is very fair, it delights in sweet odours, and it dearly loves its young. So too Christ is most fair, He delights in the odour of virtues, and dearly loves His children.

As the Holy Spirit thus descended upon Christ, so has He often descended in the form of a dove upon illustrious Christians, more especially upon doctors, bishops, and pontiffs of the Church, and thus, as it were, consecrated them. S. Eleucadius, the disciple of S. Apollinaris, Apostle of Ravenna, when a dove had flown upon his head, was ordained Bishop of Ravenna. After a life illustrious for sanctity he migrated to heaven, A.D. 115. (Philip Ferrar in his *Catalogue of the Saints of Italy*.)

Thus a dove flew down upon the head of S. Aderitus, in the presence of the clergy, and designated him the successor of S. Apollinaris, and second Bishop of Ravenna.

S. Marcellinus in like manner, was designated Bishop of the same city, A.D. 230.

S. Fabian, in consequence of a dove lighting upon his head, was elected Bishop of Rome.

When S. Gregory was writing his works, the Holy Spirit, in the likeness of a dove, was seen to instil into his ear what he wrote.

So S. Basil, who wished to be baptized in the same river Jordan as Christ was, in celebrating Mass, was surrounded by a celestial light, and gave orders for a dove to be made of pure gold, and a portion of the consecrated Host to be placed in it, and suspended it above the altar. So Amphilochius. He adds that S. Ephrem saw the Holy Ghost, in the likeness of a dove of fire, sitting upon S. Basil, wherefore he exclaimed, "Truly is Basil a column of fire; truly the Holy Ghost speaks by his mouth."

Flavian the patriarch, by the command of an angel, consecrating S. John Chrysostom to be a priest, beheld a white dove fly down upon his head. Leo Augustus relates this in his life of S. Chrysostom. (See Baronius, A.D. 456, n. 7.)

This was the reason why the impostor Mahomet tamed a dove, and accustomed it to fly to him, by placing *in his ear grains of corn*,

which the dove picked and ate, and by this means he persuaded the people that the Holy Spirit was his friend, and dictated the Koran to him, and revealed the most secret purposes of God. He also caused the dove to bring him a scroll, on which was written in letters of gold, "Whosoever shall tame a bull, let him be king." But he had brought up a bull, which of course he easily tamed, and was thereupon saluted as king by the foolish people. So the authors of the Life of Mahomet.

And lighting upon him. Piously says S. Bernard (*Serm.* 1 *de Epiphan.*), "Not unsuitably came a dove, to point out the Son of God; for nothing so well corresponds to a lamb as a dove. As the lamb among beasts, so is the dove among birds. There is the utmost innocence in each, the utmost gentleness, the utmost guilelessness. What is so opposed to all malice as a lamb and a dove? They know not how to injure or do harm."

And behold a voice, &c. From the opened heaven a dove glided down upon the head of Christ, and whilst it sat upon Him, there came the voice, "This is my Son." The voice explained the symbol of the dove, that it had reference to Christ, and to Him alone. This voice, "in the Person of the Father, was framed by the ministry of angels," say Victor Antioch. (*in c.* 1 *S. Marc.*). Here was first revealed to the world the mystery of the Holy Trinity, which had been darkly indicated to the Jews. The Father manifested Himself by a voice, the Son was seen in the flesh, the Holy Ghost was visible in the form of a dove, that it might be signified that the faith of the Holy Trinity was about to be unfolded, and that the baptism of Christ was conferred in Their Name. For although all these things—viz., heaven opened, the forming of the voice, the descent of the dove—were, as regards operations, *ad extra,* as theologians say, common to the whole Trinity, yet each several Person was represented by the aforenamed symbols. (See S. Augustine, *Serm.* 38 *de Temp.*)

This is my Son. Greek ὁ υἱὸς—*i.e.*, the Son of God the Father, by nature, not by adoption, as the angels and holy men are sons of God. Therefore the Son of God is not a creature, but the

Creator, consubstantial with God the Father, as was defined by the Nicene Council.

Mark and Luke have, in different words, but with the same meaning, "*Thou art* my Son." And it is probable that these last were the exact words used, not merely because of the *consensus* of two Evangelists, but because, when Jesus was looking up into heaven, and praying to the Father, it is probable that the words would be immediately and directly addressed to Him. So Jansen, Maldonatus, and others.

My beloved Son. Gr. ὁ αγαπητός, *i.e., only and chiefly beloved*, through whom all others are beloved. For no one is beloved by God save those whom Christ loves. The Syriac has *most beloved.*

In whom I am well pleased. As it were, "Thou only, O Christ, art perfectly, in all things, and infinitely pleasing unto Me; and no one is pleasing unto Me save through Thee. For by Thee I am well pleased with all the human race, with whom I was offended because of Adam's sin." The Heb. רצה signifies both to please and to be propitious, or reconciled.

"Because Thou art the Brightness of My glory and the express Image of My substance (Heb. i. 3.), Thou art immeasurably pleasing unto Me. In Thee nothing ever displeases, but all things please Me. Thou art He in whom I have always delight. And for Thy sake all Thy disciples and followers—that is to say, all holy Christians—are pleasing unto Me." There is an allusion to Noah, who alone of his generation pleased God. (See Gen. vi. 9; viii. 20.)

As, therefore, Noah was well-pleasing unto God—especially when he offered the sacrifice unto Him, with which He was propitiated, and promised that He would no more destroy the world by the waters of a flood—so, much more, when Christ offered Himself to God as a peculiar and special victim, did He cause God to be propitious to the whole human race. "By this Voice was Christ constituted by God the Father the universal Doctor and Legislator of the world."

The voice added, *Hear ye him.* "Hear Christ, believe in Him,

obey Him. He hath come forth from My bosom. He will show you My mysteries, things kept secret from the foundation of the world. He will open to you the way of peace, the way to heaven, the way to happiness. He will preach to you the glad tidings of the kingdom of heaven, even such divine things as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have they come into the heart of man." Hence, when the Magdalen sat at the feet of Jesus, and diligently listened to Him, it was said to her, "Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken from her."

Very well saith S. Leo *(Serm. de Transfigurat.)*: "This is My Son who is from Me, and with Me from everlasting. This is My Son, who is not separated from Me in Deity, divided in power, severed by eternity. This is My Son, My very own, not created of any other substance, but begotten of Myself. This is My Son, by whom all things were made. This is My Son, who sought not by robbery that equality which He hath with Me. He attained it by no presumption, but, abiding in the form of My glory, and in order that He might fulfil Our common purpose for the restoration of the human race, He bowed down the unchangeable Godhead, even to the form of a servant. In Him, therefore, I am in all things well pleased, and by His preaching I am manifested, and by His humility I am glorified. Hear ye Him, therefore, without delay, for He is the Truth and the Life, He is My strength and My wisdom. Hear Him of whom the lips of the prophets sung. Hear Him who hath redeemed the world by His Blood; who by His Cross hath prepared for you a ladder by which ye may ascend up to heaven."

CHAPTER IV.

1 *Christ fasteth, and is tempted.* 11 *The angels minister unto him.* 13 *He dwelleth in Capernaum,* 17 *beginneth to preach,* 18 *calleth Peter, and Andrew,* 21 *James, and John,* 23 *and healeth all the diseased.*

THEN was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.

3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

12 Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee;

13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:

14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,
15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, *by* the way of the sea, beyond Jor an, Galilee of the Gentiles;
16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.
17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
18 And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.
19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.
20 And they straightway left *their* nets, and followed him.
21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.
22 And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.
23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.
24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.
25 And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, and *from* Jerusalem, and *from* Judæa, and *from* beyond Jordan.

Of the devil. Syriac, *by the accuser*, Gr. διάβολος, *accuser, calumniator.* For Satan is he who accuses men before God perpetually, that he may gain them for himself and Gehenna.

Then, that is, immediately after His Baptism. Hence S. Mark says, "Straightway the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness." Whence it would appear that Christ on the same 6th day of January on which he was baptized was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness. And at the close of the same day He commenced His forty days' fast, which He would finish on the 15th of February. Thus speedy in every good work are both Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Was led, Gr. ἀνήχθη, *i.e.*, was withdrawn, and taken away out of the midst of the multitude of the people with whom He had hitherto dwelt, that He might have time for prayer and fasting. Mark has, *the Spirit driveth him*, where the word *drive* denotes the power, efficacy and alacrity of the Spirit which was in Christ, and

which was to be in the Apostles and all other Christians, and which was to drive or impel them to heroic acts of virtue, according to the words (Rom. viii. 14) "As many as are driven by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Vulg.) Christ then was led by the Spirit, not rapt through the air, but through the impulse of the Spirit, going with the utmost alacrity upon His feet, to the scene of His contest with the devil.

The desert was Christ's wrestling ground of prayer and fasting and an angelic life, where He entered upon His duel with Lucifer and vanquished him.

The wilderness. This desert is called Quarantana. Adrichomius, in his description of the Holy Land, gives the following account of it out of Brochardus and others:—

"The desert of Quarantana, between Jerusalem and Jericho, begins near Anathoth, and extends above Gilgal as far as the desert of Tekoa and Engaddi, by the Dead Sea. Here dwelt John the Baptist. In the same wilderness is a mountain called also Quarantana. It is near the Jordan, lofty and difficult of access. Here the Lord was first tempted of Satan. There is upon the top a ruined chapel, held in veneration on account of Christ's fast and prayer."

Tropologically, listen to S. Ambrose, lib. 3 *de Virgin.*: "Let us, too, follow Christ, far from luxury, far from lasciviousness, living as it were in the arid soil of His life of fasting. Not in the market-place, not in the broad streets is Christ found. So let us not seek for Christ where He cannot be found. Christ is not in the courts of law, for Christ is peace; in the courts are lawsuits, Christ is justice; in the forum is iniquity, Christ is charity; in the forum is detraction, Christ is fidelity; in the forum is fraud and perfidy," &c.

Of the Spirit. Not the devil, but the Holy Ghost. This is clear from the sixteenth verse of the third chapter. This Spirit of God, therefore, was the possessor and charioteer of Christ, driving Him into the desert. Whence the Syriac has, *of the Spirit of holiness, i.e.*, the Holy Ghost, the fountain of all holiness. This is clear,

too, from the presence of the Greek article, τοῦ Πνεύματος. And *The Spirit* is here put in opposition to the devil, who follows as the adversary of Christ and the Holy Ghost, that Christ's Own Spirit might lead Him where the evil spirit might find Him to tempt Him, says S. Gregory.

That he might be tempted of the devil. The word *that* does not signify that the Holy Ghost directly intended that the devil's temptation should assail Christ, for that were an evil thing: but only that the temptation should be permitted for the sake of Christ's profit and victory, which He surely foresaw, and so opposed Christ, as it were an athlete, to the devil.

1. In the first place, the Holy Spirit intended by this temptation to afford to Christians, baptized and converted to God, an ideal of religious life, whereby they should know they must fortify themselves against the temptations which are sure to attack them. So SS. Chrysostom and Hilary. Whence Tertullian (*de Baptism.*, last chapter) teaches, that it is here signified, that no one without temptation shall attain the Kingdom of God.

2. The Holy Ghost would show that there is no temptation which may not be overcome by grace, by prayer and fasting, by repeating the words of Scripture, the precepts and promises of God.

3. Christ, who was often tempted by Satan, thus showed Himself to be like unto all other men, His brethren, as the Apostle teaches, Heb. iv. 15.

4. That He might show that those who are about to become doctors, preachers, prelates, apostles, must needs be first proved by temptations, and be strengthened by prayer and meditation in solitary retreats, and there drink in a large supply of the Spirit, which they may afterwards pour forth upon others. They who be wise, first go apart with Christ into the wilderness of prayer and meditation.

5. That challenging Lucifer to battle, He might vanquish him, and his whole army of demons with him. This duel between Christ and the devil is as when the sun struggles with the sur-

rounding clouds, with this motto, "Splendour is from me." "For the sun," as S. Ambrose says, "is the eye of the world, the pleasantness of day, the beauty of the heaven, the measure of seasons, the strength and vigour of all the stars. As the sun dissipates the clouds, so does Christ all the temptations of the devil." And again, "As the sun makes brilliant the darkest clouds, so does Christ, by the splendour of His grace, convert desolation into consolation, temptations into victories, war into triumph."

6. That by His temptation as an example, He might overcome our temptations, and might teach us to fight with and overcome the same antagonist. For although the faithful, conscious of their own infirmity, ought to avoid temptations as far as they can, according to the words of Christ, "Lead us not into temptation," yet when temptations do come, they must, relying upon Christ, valiantly resist them, remembering His words; "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Whence S. Augustine on Psalm xci. says, "Therefore was Christ tempted, that the Christian might not be overcome by the tempter." For as S. Ambrose says, "When thou art tempted, recognize that a crown is being prepared for thee. Take away the contests of the martyrs, you take away their crowns. Take away their torments, you take away their beatitudes. Is not the temptation of Joseph the celebration of his virtue? Is not the wrong of his prison the crown of his chastity?"

S. Luke (iv. 1) says, *being tempted of the devil forty days.* From this some think that besides the three temptations mentioned by the Evangelist, Christ suffered many other temptations during these forty days. They also think that verse 14 points in the same direction, *And when he had ended all the temptation.* Thus Euthymius, Jansen and Cajetan, Origen (*Hom.* 29 *in Luc.*), Bede (lib. 1 *in Marc.*), Augustine (lib. 2 *de Consens. Evang.* c. 4).

S. Luke, by using the present participle πειραζόμενος, which the Vulgate renders by the imperfect, *was being tempted*, seems to refer principally to the three celebrated temptations of Christ as the

summing up as it were and the chief of them all. As Suarez rightly points out.

Of the devil, namely Lucifer, the prince of all the demons. And it was just that Christ should now contend with him, as He had afore contended with him in heaven, when He cast Satan ambitiously seeking the hypostatic union, and envious that He was about to become man, down to Tartarus, as some suppose. Lucifer therefore, at this time, came forth from hell, and taking the form of a man—of a holy man, says Carthusianus—tempted Christ, (1) that he might make trial whether He were God's own Son in very deed, and (2) that he might entice Him to sin. As therefore Lucifer, through Eve, tempted Adam, and overcame him, so he tempted Christ, and was overcome by Him. We are here taught that when the devil foresees any one will be an illustrious doctor of the Church, he is accustomed to assail him with various temptations, that he may cast him down, and destroy the harvest of souls which he sees he may reap, that he may choke the fruit in the seed, as now he strove to strangle all Christians in Christ their Parent.

And when he had fasted. Christ, after the example of Moses and Elias, fasted forty whole days and nights, without taking any food or drink whatever. He fasted, not by natural but by supernatural strength; and not by strength received from without, as Moses and Elias, but by His own proper and intrinsic, that is to say, divine strength, as the Fathers teach, *passim*.

You ask for what reasons Christ fasted?

I answer, 1. That by prayer and fasting He might prepare Himself for His work of preaching, and teach us to do the same.

2. Objectively, that by the hunger consequent upon His fasting, He might afford the devil an opportunity of tempting Him; and by the same fasting might arm Himself, and teach us to arm ourselves against temptations. So S. Basil (*Hom. 1 on Tempt.*).

3. That by macerating His flesh, He might make satisfaction for Adam's eating the forbidden fruit, and for all the gluttony of his posterity.

4. That He might dispose Himself for holy contemplation, and show that fasting is as wings, whereby the soul is carried upward to celestial things. (S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* 1 *in Gen.*)

5. That He might teach us to despise corporal for the sake of spiritual delights; and that by the contemplation of divine things, and the joy which arises from that contemplation, the longing for carnal pleasures is quenched, and the thought of food and drink taken away. Whence the Abbot John, as Cassian testifies (*Collat.* 19. 4) was so fed with the pleasures of contemplation, that he could not remember whether he had eaten the day before or not.

6. And chiefly, that He might inaugurate the Lenten Fast, observed by Christians according to Apostolic tradition; that He might sanction, and, as it were, consecrate this fast by His example. So S. Ignatius (*Epist.* 7), and other Fathers, *passim*. The reason was, first, that we might give a tithe of all the days of the year to God. So S. Gregory (*Hom.* 16. *in Evang.*) "From this day until the gladness of Easter are six weeks, or forty-two days, from which, as six Sundays not to be given to fasting must be deducted, there remain only thirty-six days. Thus do we deny ourselves for six-and-thirty days, as giving the tenth of the 365 days of the year to God, that we, who have lived by the gift which we have received for ourselves, might, for the sake of our Maker, mortify ourselves by fasting in His own tithe of time. Whence, brethren most beloved, as ye are bidden by the law to offer the tithe of your substance, so also offer to God the tithe of your days." S. Ambrose gives another reason, that as the Israelites passed by forty-two stations through the desert to the Promised Land, so we too arrive by forty days of fasting at the longed-for feast and joy of Easter. Whence Tertullian, Cyprian, S. Ambrose (*Epist.* 25), and others call a fast a *station*. See in Peter Bongus much more concerning the mysteries contained in the number forty. See also S. Jerome (*ad Præsid.*) on the Paschal Candle.

We may add that the Lenten Fast is appointed for the spring, not only for the sanctity of the soul, but for the sanity of the body,

as D. Viringas, Professor of Medicine at Louvain, in his book called *Fasting, the Physician of the Church*, says. In spring the blood breaks out in various humours, which produce fevers and various disorders, unless they are kept under by fasting and fish.

Mystically, S. Augustine, on Ps. cxi. *sub init.*, teaches us that the number forty, in connection with fasting, signifies the whole period of this present life, assigned by God to repentance and expiation of sins, by which we arrive at the Easter of a joyful resurrection, and at Pentecost, or the fiftieth day of eternal reward and glory.

Moreover, some of the ancient Christians, imitating the example of Christ, were very rigid in the observance of this fast, as Baronius shows (A.C. 57, c. 153). Whence Lucian (*in Philopatro*) testifies that the early Christians were so accustomed to fasting that they would spend ten whole days without food. More fully writes S. Gregory Nazianzen (*ad Hellen.*), concerning the monks who live in the deserts of Pontus, that there were many of them who abstained from food twenty whole days, and as many nights, imitating Christ in one half of His fast. And S. Augustine writes (*Epist.* 86 *ad Casulanum*), that there were some in his time who kept a whole week's fast, and that he himself was acquainted with them. He adds, "It has been solemnly affirmed to us by brethren worthy of credit, that one kept a fast of forty whole days."

Afterwards he hungered. The most probable meaning is that Christ felt some sensation of hunger during the forty days, though not such hunger us He did when they were finished, and which incited Him to seek for food.

With Christ equally as with Moses and Elias, prayer and converse with God were the nourishment both of soul and body throughout the forty days; for they who wholly give themselves up to those things are so fed with their sweetness that they do not experience the pangs of hunger.

You will ask whether Christ by natural strength could live for forty days without food and drink?

I reply—1. Both experience and physicians teach that such a thing is impossible to the power of nature. There is the *à priori*

reason against it, that when aliment is withdrawn the vital heat languishes and dies, as the fire of a lamp is extinguished when oil fails.

You may say that Pliny (lib. 7, c. 2) tells us that the Indians at the sources of the Ganges live merely by inhaling the smell of fruits and flowers. Rondelivius also (lib. 1 *de Piscibus*, c. 13) relates that a certain person lived for forty years upon air alone. Robert Bacon relates that an English girl lived for twenty years in a similar manner. Simon Portius also says that a girl of Spires, about A.D. 1540, lived four years without food. A French priest lived for two years without food at Rome, in the time of Nicholas V. As to what Pliny says, it is fabulous. Odour refreshes the brain, but does not fill the stomach. The other instances were brought about either by divine power or by the devil's art, a wonderful example of which last, B. Prosper relates of an Indian girl. The young woman of Spires laboured under a disease of slow, viscous, and chilous phlegm, and so was kept alive. In a somewhat parallel manner Indians, by chewing the herb coca, and Scythians, by the herb hippice, can sustain hunger and thirst for twelve days. See Delrio (lib. 2, *disquis. Magic. quæst.* 21); and Coimb. (lib. 1 *de Generat.*, c. 5, *q.* 7, *art.* 1 & 2).

2. Vehement and protracted attention of the mind to other things, such as mathematical, philosophical, or theological speculations, is able to keep a man without food for some time, but not for forty days. And so, contemplation alone would not have enabled Christ to live without food for forty days.

3. The fasts of Christ, Moses, Elias, Simeon Stylites, and such as they fasting for forty days, was supernatural, arising from a singular providence of God. God in their case suspended for forty days the action of natural heat, and sustained and nourished them internally, so that they lived and flourished during the time, just as even at this present time Enoch and Elias are living well and strong without food for so many thousands of years in the terrestrial Paradise, where they feed only upon the spiritual delights of prayer and contemplation.

Hungered. God, who had for forty days stayed this hunger by His intervention, afterwards withdrew that intervention, and gave up the body of Christ to the suffering of hunger—1. That He might declare Christ to be true man. As S. Chrysologus says: "To feel and to conquer hunger is a work of human labour, not to hunger at all is the result of Divine power." (*Serm.* 11.) Secondly, as S. Ambrose says, "That the Lord's hunger might be a pious fraud upon the devil," that the devil being allured by the appearance of hunger, might tempt Christ as if He were a man, knowing not that He was God. *In c.* 4 *S. Luc.:* "The lowly God-man hungered, that the lofty Man-God might not be made known to the enemy," says a certain holy person.

And when the tempter came—came, i.e., in human form, and with an audible voice. For this temptation of Christ, like that of Adam and Eve, in their state of innocence, was effected by the external suggestion of the voice, not by internal cogitations and movements of the fancy, rising up against reason and the Spirit. For in Adam, and much more in Christ, was original righteousness, which kept in subjection to the reason all motions of the soul and imagination, so that in Him was no unlawful thought, no motion of concupiscence that could be stirred up by the devil, such as is stirred up in us since Adam's sin. For by it we have lost original righteousness, and are vexed by concupiscence. So Damasc. (lib. 3, *de Fide*, c. 20), and from him theologians, *passim*. Whence S. Gregory (*Hom.* 10): "By suggestion Christ could be tempted; but His mind the delectation of sin wounded not, and therefore all that temptation of the devil was without, not within."

The tempter. Not because he is the only tempter, but because he is the first and chief among tempters. For they mistake who say that all temptation comes from Satan. Some temptations arise out of our own carnal will and frailness, and some from the world, *i.e.*, from worldly and carnal men. So S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* 54 *in Acta*), "Many sin without the devil. He does not do everything: many things even come of our slothfulness alone." The devil, however, often rouses concupiscence in us by repre-

senting to the imagination things to be lusted after, and thus inflaming the sensual appetite. In the same way he stirs up the world, *i.e.*, worldly and carnal men, to tempt us by persecuting us, or by enticing us to their follies. So he is called the tempter, κατ' ἐξοχήν. Note here the craft of the devil, how he tempts every one by that to which he has a propensity, or in which he is weak. As fowlers and hunters lay in snares for wild birds and beasts various sorts of food such as each prefer, so also the devil offers the pleasures of the table to such as are prone to gluttony, to those who are full he offers ease and sloth, to the proud he offers honours, to the contentious lawsuits and strifes, to the avaricious usury, fraud, iniquitous bargains, and so on. (S. Gregory, lib. 14, *Moral.* c. 7.)

If thou be, &c. The devil had heard the Father's Voice at the Baptism of Christ—*Thou art my beloved Son;* yet forasmuch as he saw Him in some respects like a poor, weak, ordinary mortal, and being for that reason in doubt whether He were the very Son of God by nature, the Word itself of the Father, or only a very eminent Son of God by adoption, he tempts Christ, and asks Him to turn stones into bread, that by His performance of the miracle, or inability to perform it, he might determine what kind of Son of God he was. For as by the Word of God all things had been created in the beginning, so by the same Word might stones be suddenly and instantly converted into bread. If therefore Christ had done this, the devil would have believed that He was the Word of God.

Angels indeed are able to turn stones into bread, but not suddenly and directly, but by degrees and indirectly, by applying active energies to passive objects, with many previous actions, alterations, and conversions; but if Christ could not have done what He was asked, and had said that He could not, and that this was a Divine work, and peculiar to God, the devil would have urged, "Then thou art not the Word of God, nor His Son by nature." It is a probable opinion of many theologians that the sin and pride of Lucifer in heaven were, that when God revealed

to him that the Son of God would assume man's nature, and bade him submit himself to Christ as man, he became envious of Christ, that a man forsooth should be preferred to himself, who was the most glorious angel, and that a man should be taken up into hypostatic union with the WORD. Of this honour he was himself ambitious, and so rebelled against Christ and God. When therefore he saw this man called the Son of God by John the Baptist and the Father, he wished to find out if He were really God's Son, that he might pour out upon Him his pristine envy, fury, and indignation. So Suarez. This was Satan's cross, gnawing and tormenting his proud mind. But he conceals all this, veils it beneath the cloak of charity, that he wished to succour Christ in His hunger. Wherefore it is probable that the devil did not abruptly and without preface say to Christ, *If thou be*, &c., but first saluted Him kindly, and insinuated himself by some such bland words as these, "What, my lord, are you doing here alone? I saw you baptized of late in Jordan: I heard a voice come down to you from heaven, *This is my Son*. I should be glad to know whether you are truly the Son of God by nature, or only His adopted Son by grace. I observe also that you are utterly spent with hunger after your fast of forty days. If then you are the Son of God, relieve your hunger, convert these stones into loaves of bread. This for you were most easy."

Wherefore what S. Chrysostom says in this place is not so probable—that the devil endeavoured to tempt Christ to unbelief. Somewhat as though he had said thus:—"It is true you heard a voice at your baptism, *This is my Son*, but do not imagine yourself to be the Son of God, or, if you are, turn these stones into bread." For it would have been folly to try to persuade Christ to believe that He was not the Son of God, if He was indeed His Son, and knew that He was.

The devil wished also, by this temptation, to entice Christ to make a vain boast of his power, and to distrust the aid of God His Father. "Your Father has for forty days been unmindful of you; He has not given you food. Now then, take care of yourself."

There was also a temptation to gluttony. For the temptation to gluttony, in this case, would have been, on account of hunger to yield to the devil, to acquiesce in his persuasions, and work a miracle. For this were directly contrary to religion, which forbids all commerce with Satan. Indirectly, it were contrary to temperance. Calvin, therefore, is wrong in denying that Christ was tempted to gluttony. Hear S. Gregory (*Hom.* 16 *in Evang.*), where He teaches that Christ was assailed by a threefold temptation—viz., gluttony, vain glory, and avarice—because Adam had been attacked and vanquished by the same temptations: "He tempted him to gluttony when he showed him the fruit of the forbidden tree, and persuaded him to eat. He tempted him to vain glory when he said, 'Ye shall be as gods.' He tempted him to covetousness when he added, 'knowing good and evil.' For avarice is not only of money, but also of greatness. For that is rightly called avarice where loftiness above measure is ambitiously desired. Christ was assailed by the same temptations, but overcame them: by gluttony, when the devil said, 'Turn these stones into bread;' by vain glory, 'If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down;' by covetousness of magnificence, when he showed Him all the kingdoms of the world."

But he answered, &c. The Greek and the Vulgate have, *in every word*. This is by enallage of the preposition, *in* every, for *from* every, as the Vulgate translates in Deut. viii. 3, the passage which Christ here quotes. The Hebrew is, "*upon* every thing which goeth forth from the mouth of the Lord shall man live"—that is to say, on whatsoever thing the Lord shall command, or order for the sustentation of life, man shall live and be nourished, as He fed the Jews for forty years without bread, with manna from heaven (the discourse in Deut. viii. 3 is upon this manna), and fed Moses, Elias, and Christ for forty days by His word, and by His power, preserving nature. Thus, too, God nourished the Abbot John for three years with the Eucharist alone, which he was accustomed to receive every Lord's day, when an angel said to him, "Christ is thy true food." Palladius (*in Lausiaca*, c. 61)

attests this. So, too, God nourished S. Mary o Egypt, for nearly forty-seven years, in the desert, without earthly food, feeding her with tears and heavenly joys. So He fed the Magdalen with nothing save angelic music, seven times a day repeated.

Of this Petrarch sings—

> "As pass the weary hours away,
> Seven times is sung the angels' lay,
> Seven times in each revolving day."

So the great S. Sabas, says the author of his life, kept abstinence through all times of fasting, tasting no food whatever, save that on Saturdays and Sundays he received the holy sacrament.

Mystically, every faithful Christian lives by every word of God: —1. By receiving Christ, who is God's Eternal Word, and who, being made man, nourishes us by His doctrine, His grace, and His example. And we, by receiving Himself, by receiving His Flesh, receive His Godhead in the Eucharist. 2. God gives the words of sacred Scripture, which feed by illuminating and inflaming the mind. 3. He feeds us by prayers and holy inspiration.

Tropologically, S. Gregory (*Hom.* 16 *in Evang.*) here admires the meekness of Christ. "Consider how great is the patience of God, and how great our impatience. If we be injured, or provoked by any wrong, we are moved with wrath, and either revenge ourselves as far as we can, or threaten when we are not able. Behold, the Lord endured the onset of the devil, and answered him nothing save words of meekness. He endures him whom He might have punished."

Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, *i.e.* Jerusalem. The word, *then*, signifies that the devil, having been conquered by Christ in the first temptation to gluttony, immediately subjected Him to a second, vain glory. You may inquire why S. Luke places this temptation third instead of second. The reason is that S. Luke in this place, as in many others, disregards the chronological order of the temptations, which Matthew accurately observes. Whence the latter says in the eighth verse, *Again the*

devil taketh him. And this is a natural and congruous sequence of temptation, to pass from gluttony to vain glory. So SS. Chrysostom, Jerome, Hilary, and others. For when the devil sees any one despise the pleasures and allurements of the flesh, he raises up against him the spiritual temptation of vanity and presumption.

Taketh him. The first opinion we will here notice is that of S. Cyprian (*Sermon on the Fast and Temptation of Christ*). He thinks that the devil's taking Christ up was not real but only imaginary, like the visions seen by Ezekiel, and such as are the translations of sorcerers, who seem to themselves to be transported by the devil to a feast—a grand assembly, when in reality they are not transported, but the devil is playing tricks with their imagination, somewhat like the illusions of dreams. But we cannot suppose that the devil thus played false with the imagination of Christ, especially since the devil had no power over Christ's inner man. The whole of this temptation was effected by means of an external voice, not through interior suggestion, as I have already said from S. Gregory.

2. Euthymius and Maldonatus think that Christ was led by the devil upon His feet up to the pinnacle of the Temple; and that Satan did this, lest by carrying Him through the air he should betray himself. So likewise Anselm and Origen, *Hom.* 31 *in S. Luc.* But from the desert of Quarantana to Jerusalem is a long journey, greater than could well have been accomplished in a day.

3. And most probably, Christ was taken up—*i.e.*, was carried through the air to the pinnacle of the Temple. So SS. Jerome, Gregory, Author *Imperfecti*, the *Gloss*, S. Thomas. Nor is it wonderful, says S. Gregory, that Christ should suffer the devil to deal with Him in this manner, since He suffered Himself to be crucified by the devil's members—the wicked Jews. Nor did the demon betray himself by this, because he might have transported Christ in the guise of an angel of light. Or, indeed, he cared little now about betraying who he was, since he already suspected and feared that he was thoroughly known. Whence in the third

temptation he boldly threw off all disguise of an angel of light, and unveiled his Satanic arrogance.

The Author *Imperfecti*, and from him S. Thomas, here observe that although the devil thus took up Christ so that Christ might be seen of all, and be supposed to have commerce with Satan and be thought a magician, Christ so wrought unseen that He should be beheld of none, though the devil knew it not.

So Christ made the devil suffer an illusion, who had intended to play falsely with Him. For the demon thought that if Christ were the Son of God, He would not allow Himself to be taken up and carried through the air, and by this would know whether He were the Son of God or not; but Christ, by suffering this, frustrated the demon's plan, and left him still in doubt. Whence S. Chrysostom was of opinion that the devil supposed that he carried Christ through the air to the pinnacle of the Temple against His will, and because He was not able to resist him.

Upon the pinnacle. It is probable that this pinnacle was the ridge or extreme point of the roof of the porch of that part of the Temple which was called the Sanctuary, or the Holy of Holies, for this part of the Temple alone had a roof (the Court of Israel was open to the sky), and like a tower overtopped the whole edifice. It was 120 cubits high. If Christ had fallen down from thence, He would have fallen into the court of the priests, between the porch just spoken of and the altar of burnt offering. The devil therefore suggested to Christ that He should cast Himself down from this pinnacle into the court of the priests, using some some such arguments as these: "Cast thyself down, and show thyself to the priests and the other worshippers of God, and to all the people (for they, from the Court of Israel, were able to behold the sacrifices which were offered in the court of the priests), show thyself, I say, by miraculously gliding down unhurt, to be the Son of the True God, of Him whom in this court all are worshipping, and to whom they are offering sacrifices." For by this temptation Satan wished Christ to make a vain show of Himself and His glory. So Franc. Lucas, Toletus, and others.

Jansen and Maldonatus understand the passage in another way. They observe that the houses and the Temple of the Jews did not have steep roofs, but flat like a table, so that men could walk, dine, and even sleep upon them, as is plain from Josh. ii. 6; Matt. x. 27, &c. They add that this flat roof was surrounded on every side by a low wall, or parapet, to prevent persons from falling down, according to the command of God, Deut. xxii. 8. And it is probable that in this parapet there were some parts higher than the rest, as for instance at the corners, just as we see in quadrilateral buildings at the present day. And they think that Satan placed Christ upon one of these angular turrets, which are called in Gr. πτερύγια, in Heb. כנפים *kenaphim*, *i.e.* "wings," because they towered aloft, and were like expanded wings floating in the air. So Angelomus, Eucherius, Lyra, &c.

By a similar temptation, as Cassian relates, *Collat.* 2, cap. 4, the devil overthrew Hero. For when he had lived upon bread and water only, he persuaded him that he was so holy, and so dear to God and the angels, that they would bear him up, if he were cast down from on high. Wherefore he threw himself down headlong into a well, and there miserably perished.

Moraliter. The devil, who fell down from heaven into Tartarus, strives to cast or drag others down with him. Wherefore when he persuades any one to sin, he causes him to cast himself down. As Christ saith to the perverse Jews, "Ye are from beneath, I am from above." (S. John viii. 23.) Again, Christ, studiously concealing from the devil that He was the Son of God, eluded all his arts and devices, and kept him in doubt and suspense, so that he should not know in what way he might tempt Him. Wherefore learn not to make known to every one the secrets of thy soul, lest thou be hindered of the devil. In battles, the crown of victory is his who can conceal his own plans, and discover those of the enemy. A Christian learns by frequent experience that heroic acts of virtue are easily accomplished, if the determination of them be kept secret in the mind, and they are suddenly brought out into the sphere of action, before the demon has been able to get

scent of them and oppose them. This is the art of deluding the demon.

For it is written, &c. A citation of Ps. xci. 11. The angels in this place mean properly men's guardian angels, though any other messengers whom God sends in various ways to help and save men may be understood. Whence SS. Chrysostom, Jerome, Hilary on this passage, Origen (*Hom. 24 in Luc.*), Nazianzen (*Orat. in S. Baptisma.*), think that the devil here wrongly cites Holy Scripture; that the Psalmist in the passage in question speaks of mere men, not of Christ, who was the God-man. For He had not, like other men, a guardian angel; the Divinity Itself was the Guardian of His Humanity.

On the contrary, S. Ambrose (*in cap. 4 Luc.*), and Remigius (on Ps. xci.), think that the devil did not wrest this passage of the Psalms, but applied it rightly to Christ; for although He had not any stated guardian angel, He had all the angels at His call, all deputed to minister unto Him. The devil did, however, wrest the text so far as this, that he used it for an evil purpose, namely, to make Christ cast Himself down. For God hath promised this guardianship of the angels to the righteous who act prudently and piously, not rashly and presumptuously, after the manner of those who tempt God. Hear S. Bernard, on Psalm *Qui habitat, Ser.* 14. "What has he commanded? Surely what follows in the Psalm, 'That they may keep thee in all thy ways.' Does he say in precipices, in such a way as casting thyself headlong from the pinnacle of the Temple? That is not a way but a destruction, a downfall. Or if it be a way, it is thine own, not God's."

Moraliter, the same S. Bernard (on Ps. xci. *Serm.* 12): "He has commanded His angels concerning thee. Wonderful condescension! And, indeed, great affection of His love! For to whom, concerning whom, and what hath He commanded?" After some other remarks, "How great reverence ought these words to instil into you! What devotion! What trust! reverence for their presence, devotion for their kindness, confidence for their protection. Walk then warily, as one to whom the angels are nigh

Whithersoever thou mayest go apart, in every corner have thine angel in reverence. Dare not to do in his presence that which thou wouldst not dare to do if I saw thee." "As often as any very fierce temptation is seen to oppress thee, or vehement tribulation to threaten thee, invoke thy Guardian in those due times of trouble. Call upon him and say, 'Lord, save us, we perish.' He neither slumbereth nor sleepeth."

In their hands shall they bear thee. So of S. Benedict it was said by S. Bernard, that at a certain time, when he appeared to have his eyes intently fixed upon a refulgent light, he saw the soul of S. Germanus, Bishop of Capua, borne by the angels in a globe of fire into heaven.

Jesus said unto him, It is written again, &c. For he tempts God who asks for a miracle without necessity, such as this would have been, for Christ might have descended from the pinnacle by means of the stairs.

In necessity, however, say for the sake of avoiding a worse destruction, it would be lawful to cast oneself from a precipice if no other way of escape appeared. Thus many holy virgins, that they might escape from the hands of sinners who sought to defile them, have cast themselves headlong into rivers, preferring to die as martyrs rather than be violated as virgins. For greater is the wreck of virginity than of life. For as the honour of the one is greater than that of the other, so also is the disgrace. This is what S. Pelagia, a virgin of Antioch, fifteen years of age, did, together with her mother and sisters. "Who," as S. Ambrose says (lib. 2, *de Virgin.*), "when the persecutors were following hard, and a river torrent shut them off from flight, but shut them up for the crown, cried out, 'What are we afraid of? Behold the water! What doth hinder us to be baptized? Let the water receive us, the water which makes virgins, which opens heaven, covers hell, hides death, creates martyrs.' When they had repeated these words, they join their hands, as though they were leading a dance, and advanced into the middle of the stream. You might have seen the pious mother twining their hands together. 'These

victims, O Christ,' she said, 'I immolate to Thee, presidents of virginity, leaders of chastity, comrades of Thy Passion.' "

Moraliter. Learn here that the devil in the same way that he tempted Christ to cast Himself headlong, tempts Christians by raising the fancy, the blood, black bile, so that they may have sad, horrible, sanguinary, despairing, blasphemous thoughts, such as had never come into their minds before. Let them comfort themselves by the example of Christ, how God permitted His temptation for His greater virtue and merit. The advice which Scipio Nasica gave the Romans not to destroy Carthage when it was conquered, lest the Roman youth should become enervated by ease, for that Carthage, raising war, would be a perpetual spur to their courage, you might apply to the struggle which the saints endure through frequent temptations. Thus S. Paul, though almost an angel upon earth, said, "Lest the abundance of the revelations should puff me up there was given me a thorn in the flesh—the messenger of Satan to buffet me." The remedy is constancy of mind, fortitude, and firm confidence in God, by which you will manfully overcome temptations of every sort, however dreadful and abominable they may be. Yea, you will despise them, and proceed with a great heart in the course of virtue in which you have entered.

The devil formerly came to S. Anthony complaining that all men spake ill of him. "And very properly," said the saint, "for it is your own fault, since you vex and distress all men." The demon answered, "I do nothing; I have no power against him who is unwilling. Men vex themselves and one another. It is their own consent to my suggestions which makes them the authors of evil." He who consents not to the devil when he tempts him, but resists him, overcomes him, and triumphs over him.

Again the devil, &c. In descriptions of the Holy Land, this mountain is said to be near the desert of Quarantana. "The devil's mountain is distant two miles from Quarantana. It is to the south of Bethel and Hai. Up it Christ was led by Satan, when he showed Him all the kingdoms of the word." So Adrichomius.

You will ask, in what way did the devil show to Christ all the

kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and that "in a moment," as S. Luke adds? Observe, God alone is able to do this absolutely; for, in the first place, God is able so to strengthen the power of sight in men that they are able to see any object, however remote, and that even through rocks and walls, so that they see things as they are in themselves, without visible appearance. In this manner He strengthens the mind of the blessed with the light of glory, so that it beholds God's essence without any appearance. So S. Anselm saw with his bodily eyes things which were done on the other side of a wall, as his "Life" records. In a similar manner God is able to make us here in Rome see with our bodily eyes things done in the bedchamber of the King of China. 2nd. God is able to multiply visible appearances in such wise that they are dispersed through places dark and dense, and even far distant and remote. 3. He is able, not only to draw forth the appearance from an object, but to prolong it to any place whatever. Thus, God showed the whole of the promised land to Moses from Mount Abarim; thus, He set the whole world before the eyes of S. Benedict in a round globe, as S. Gregory relates (lib. 2 *Dial.*, c. 35). The devil can do none of these things.

How, then, did he present all kingdoms before the eyes of Christ? 1. Origen understands kingdoms mystically, as the reign of the devil, in which he rules in some men by anger, in others by pride, in others by gluttony, and so on. Listen to Origen: "The devil showed Him innumerable multitudes of men whom he held in his dominion, and said unto Him, 'I know that Thou art come to fight against me, and take my subjects from under my sway. I ask You not to contend with me. You need not trouble Yourself to fight. One thing only do I ask, that Thou shouldst fall down and worship me, and then receive all my empire.'" But this is mystical, not literal.

2. Some think that the devil flew with Christ through all the kingdoms of the world, and in this manner showed them to Him; but the language used will not admit of this interpretation. It

was from their position on the mountain that Satan showed Christ the kingdoms.

3. S. Cyprian *(Tract. de Tentat. Christi)* is of opinion that they were not shown to the senses, but to the imagination. But I have already shown (on verse 3) that this whole series of temptations was external, not internal, and that the devil had no power over the imagination of Christ.

4. Others suppose that the demon, by means of many mirrors reflecting from one to the other, gathered together the appearances of all the kingdoms of the world, and presented them to the eyes of Christ by art similar to that, by which Socrates is said to have seen a dragon in a far distant mountain devouring men, which no one else was able to see. Similarly we now behold very distant objects by means of a nautical telescope. But to have done this, the demon must have filled the whole atmosphere with mirrors, and even then they would not have sufficed for seeing all things.

5. And with more probability, Euthymius and others, with S. Thomas (3 *p.*, *q.* 41, *art.* 4) say that the devil took Christ up on a lofty mountain, that he might show Him, at least in a confused way, the situation of each kingdom, as by saying thus: "There in that direction is Asia; there is Europe, here is Syria, there is Italy"—and all this in a moment, as Luke says, that is, in an extremely brief space of time. And because from this mountain the devil showed Christ not only all kingdoms, but the glory of them, we may add with Theophilus, Jansen, and others, that the demon, like a painter, represented in a compendious manner pictures of all kingdoms in the air by varied refractions of the rays of the sun, as is done in the case of the rainbow, and so, as it were, painted them as to cause whatsoever was glorious and splendid in all lands to be set before the eyes of Christ. Thus did the same demon make dense the air and so work upon it, that he pictured many spectres of lions, wild beasts, serpents, and monsters, and brought them before the eyes of S. Anthony that he might terrify him, as S. Athanasius asserts in his Life of S. Anthony.

If the demon is able to picture such things to the fancy, why not in the air? Various colours are depicted in the rainbow. In the time of the Maccabees, squadrons of soldiers were seen fighting in the air, with other portents.

And said unto him, &c. You ask, how did the devil dare to make such an impious proposal to Christ? I answer that he is so ambitious that even from the beginning he wished to be God, and envied Christ, as man, the Divinity which He had by means of the Hypostatic Union. Ambition, therefore, and envy blinded him so that he treated Christ as his rival. 2. Because when he saw Christ once and again declining to work a miracle, he made himself more and more certain that He was not the Son of God. 3. Because from Luke iv. 6 we learn that the devil added, "For unto me they are delivered, and unto whomsoever I will I give them," from whence it is plain that he pretended to be the Son of God and God, and consequently an object of worship, as S. Hilary says. The devil then, from Christ's patiently suffering Himself to be transported from the pinnacle of the temple to the mountain, and growing bold by Christ's modest silence, suspected that He was not the Son of God, but a mere man; and so he here demands the Divine honours which he had formerly coveted in heaven—that they should be rendered to him by Christ as well as by all other men. For this ambition of being a god is, as it were, innate in him, and blinds him, says the *Gloss*. And therefore he introduced idols, that by them he might be worshipped. Satan, moreover, by this solicitation of worship, wished to make still further trial whether or not Christ were the Son of God.

In the two previous temptations he made trial directly whether Christ were the Son of God, but in this third temptation his direct object was to tempt to avarice, ambition, and idolatry, and indirectly to find out if He were the Son of God.

Observe the arrogance of the devil. He does not care for any mere adoration, but such only as is accompanied by falling down and prostration. Hear what S. Irenæus says upon this expression, *fall down*. "The devil himself confesses that to worship him and

do his will is to fall from the glory of God." He therefore sells us vain honours at the price of our own destruction. Irenæus adds, "Not even these things which he has promised will he give to him who has fallen."

S. Luke adds that the devil gave a reason why he made this offer to Christ, but in so doing he told a double falsehood. He said "All these things have been delivered unto me," *i.e.*, by God, but he withholds mention of the Divine Name, both because it is hateful to him and because he himself wished to be accounted and worshipped as God. And God has not given into his power the kingdoms of the world. "For the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." Secondly, because it is false that the devil gives them to whom he will. He did not intend to give the kingdoms of the world to Christ, neither would he have given them, even though Christ had worshipped him. The devil therefore here betrays himself, as Toletus observes, because this his promise was false, arrogant, and deceitful. We have seen why it was false. It was deceitful because he exchanges the present for the future. "I will give," he says, but he would have the adoration now. By a similar fraud the devil endeavours to persuade men to give their youth and time present to pleasures and himself, but to give the future and old age to repentance and God: though old age is uncertain, and ill adapted for penance, as S. Gregory warns us.

Lastly, observe how Christ, by His examples and answers, teaches us that the first temptation of the flesh and hunger is to be overcome by hoping in God and His providence; the second, of pride and presumption, is to be vanquished by the fear of God; the third, to avarice and ambition, must be driven away by greatness of soul and contempt of the world. B. Peter Damian suggests three efficacious incentives to bring this to pass. "The conqueror of the demons is made the companion of angels; the exile of the world is the heir of Paradise; the denier of himself is the follower of Christ."

Then saith Jesus, Get thee hence, Satan. The Syriac adds, *behind me.* Jesus spake thus in righteous anger and indignation; and so the

devil, despairing of victory, fled away in confusion. Whence let Christians learn bravely to repel the suggestions of the devil and to rebuke him, and he will flee from them.

It is written, &c. For *thou shalt worship*, the Hebrew has תירא *tira*, "thou shalt fear." For the Hebrews by the word *fear* signify reverence, adoration, the whole worship of God. As Statius says, "Fear first made gods to be in the world." The word *only* is not in the Hebrew, but it is understood in the pronoun *Him*. *Thou shalt worship*, I say, *Him* alone, *Him, thy Creator*. Thou shalt serve Him with *latria*. For the Greek is λατρεύσεις; since *latria* is rendered to God alone, *dulia* to the saints, according to S. Augustine (*de Civ. Dei*, lib. 10, c. 1), to the Blessed Virgin *hyperdulia*.

Moraliter. Christ here teaches us the answer we should give to the devil when he tempts us to avarice or any other sin. All temptation tends to this, that we should prefer the creature to the Creator, and make it, as it were, our idol, and worship it. Thus, the idol which the devil sets before the covetous man is Plutus, mammon, riches, kingdoms; the idol of the proud man is honour, ambition; of the glutton, his belly; of the wanton, Venus. With Christ we must answer Satan, "I worship God, not Plutus or Venus." For as S. Cyprian says (*Tract. de Spect.*), "He casts himself down from the vantage ground of his nobility who is able to admire anything in comparison with God." For what is the whole world, what are all its kingdoms—all creatures—compared with God, but as a point compared with the universe? What is all time in respect of eternity, but as a moment? What are all pleasures, honours, riches, compared with the riches and honours of eternity, but vanities and shadows, yea, but dust and ashes? Despise them, therefore, for God's sake, and cleave close to Him; and then, last, overcome all temptation. As the Psalmist says, "It is good for me to hold me fast by God." And again, "My soul is firmly stayed upon God." As S. Cyprian (*de Orat. Domin.*) says, "Since of God are all things, to him who hath God nothing will be wanting, if he be not wanting to God."

In like manner, if the devil threaten you with the fear of infamy, poverty, disease, death, join thyself to God, worship Him with constant hope and prayer. S. Cyprian (*in Exhort. Martyr.*) shows that some fell away from martyrdom because they had respect to the fierceness of the torments, not to the strength and help of God, and that those stand fast and conquer who turn away their minds from the torments and fix them upon God, and say, "I can do all things through Him who strengtheneth me." God is greater than the torments. So S. Agnes, fixing all her hopes and love upon Christ, vanquished all the torments of the tyrant. For God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the strong, and He wills to show to the whole world His strength in our weakness. For God *cannot* forsake those who hope in Him, call upon Him, and worship Him.

Wherefore, S. Cyprian (*Tract. de Mortal.*) says, "Adversity does not withdraw us from the power of faith, but confirms us." Of this S. Anthony had experience, who, on the testimony of S. Athanasius, was wont to say that "the best remedy for overcoming all the temptations of the devil is spiritual joy and the love of Christ, from one sign of whose cross he flies away vanquished."

Then the devil, &c. Rightly Anon. (*in Catenâ*) says, "The end of contests is found when the adversary yields to his victor of his own will, or is vanquished by a threefold fall according to the rules of pugilism." For he who has thrice overcome his antagonist is plainly his superior.

Then the angels approached Christ in His human form which He had assumed, and congratulated him, and brought Him food, and rendered Him other offices of their service, as their Creator and their Lord.

Learn from hence that he who bravely conquers the devil is rewarded by the ministry, the strengthening, and the consolation of the angels. For the conqueror of Satan becomes, as it were, one of the angels.

Origen (*Hom.* 31 *in Luc.*) and Abulensis are of opinion that when

the devil tempts a person to some particular sin, and has been by him thoroughly vanquished, he does not tempt him any more in the same way. Salmeron, the Jesuit, thinks the same. But it is more probable that the devil having been once thoroughly vanquished either by Christ or Christians, only departs from them for a season, as S. Luke says, and returns whenever another occasion offers to try them by a similar, or even by the same temptation. For so S. Anthony was often tempted in the same way; and S. Paul was frequently, and of long continuance, tempted by the same thorn in the flesh.

Let us hear S. Ambrose (lib. 4. *in c.* 4 *Luc., ver.* 13): "Rightly are these three temptations of Christ shown to be the fountains of all sins. Nor would Scripture have said that all the temptation was ended, unless there were in these three the material of all offences, the seeds of which must be avoided in their origin. The end of temptations is the end of desires, because the causes of temptations are the causes of desires. The causes of desires are the pleasing of the flesh, the show of glory, the greed of power." And after a little, "You see, then, that the devil is not persevering in his zeal; that he is accustomed to yield to true courage. And though he does not leave off to envy, he ceases to attack, because he has often fled away when triumphed over." After much more, S. Ambrose thus concludes: "Therefore, He who wishes to give a crown suggests temptations. Whenever thou art tempted, know that a crown is being prepared."

Ver. 12.—*When Jesus had heard*, &c. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all omit the embassy of the Jews to John the Baptist, asking him if he were the Messiah. To this first year of Christ's ministry pertain also the turning water into wine, the driving the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and the discourse with Nicodemus. These all took place before the imprisonment of the Baptist, and are related only by S. John. For before his imprisonment Christ had committed to John the work of preaching, but now He took that office upon Himself. Moreover, when Christ heard of John's imprisonment, He departed out of Judæa

into Galilee, because He fled from Herod, that he might not imprison Him as he had done John. In Galilee, therefore, he began solemnly to preach, that He might fulfil Isaiah's prophecy, of which more presently.

You may say—Herod reigned in Galilee, not in Judæa. Why then did Christ, to avoid Herod, flee into Galilee? I reply, because John, preaching in Judæa, near Jericho, and gathering together the multitudes, was accused to Herod, probably by the Scribes and Pharisees. For they had been sharply rebuked by John, and called "a generation of vipers." In their anger they suggested to Herod, who they knew was hostile to John, that he should apprehend him, lest he should make a tumult, and incite the people to rebellion. Josephus (*Ant.*, lib. 18, c. 7), says that Herod slew John through fear of a rising of the people who flocked to John. The same Scribes and Pharisees were, it is probable, hostile to Christ, who had been pointed out by John, and who was wont, equally with John, freely and publicly to rebuke their vices. And although John had baptized in Judæa, he had perhaps passed into the neighbouring Peræa, which was subject to Herod. When Christ therefore heard of John's apprehension, He fled from Judæa into Galilee, lest He should be delivered by the same Scribes and Pharisees, with the connivance of the Roman governor, to Herod. But Jesus was not afraid of Herod himself, because He had not offended him personally, as John had, by reproving his adultery. This Herod Antipas was the son of Herod of Ascalon, the murderer of the innocents.

This was the second departure of Christ from Judæa into Galilee. The first is related in John i. 43, and is the same which is referred to by S. Mark (i. 14), S. Luke (iv. 14), and S. John (iv. 3, 43.)

Ver. 13.—*And leaving his own city*, &c. *Leaving i.e.*, passing it by. Jesus did not wish to enter Nazareth, although it was His own city, to begin His preaching there. S. John gives the reason (iv. 44), "Because a prophet hath no honour in his own country." Therefore He went to Capernaum, and set up there His Chair of preaching.

Observe, there were two Galilees, one, Lower Galilee in the tribes of Issachar and Zabulon, in which was Nazareth: and Upper Galilee in the tribes of Aser and Nephtali, in which was Capernaum, and which was called *Galilee of the Gentiles*, because it bordered upon Phœnicia, and was largely peopled by Gentiles. A considerable portion of it was given by Solomon to Hiram, king of Tyre. (See 1 Kings ix. 11.)

Capernaum, which is by the sea. Because it was near the Jordan, where it flows into the Sea of Galilee. From its situation it became a most celebrated emporium for merchandise, and the metropolis of Galilee. In wealth, luxury, and beauty it far surpassed all the other cities of Galilee, and thence derived its name. For Capernaum is as though כפר *caphar* נעים *naim, i.e.*, "the field of pleasantness or delight," as S. Jerome says on Hebrew names.

In this city then, Christ began to preach the kingdom of God, and to rebuke the luxury and vices of its citizens, and to call them away from earthly goods, from wealth and pride, to the heavenly riches. This He did both by His preaching and His miracles. It was here that He healed the paralytic man, who was let down through the roof upon a bed. In Capernaum He restored to sight two blind men, and healed the dumb man who was possessed of a devil. Here, whilst walking in the street, He cured the palsied servant of the centurion. Here He healed the woman with an issue of blood, who touched the fringe of His garment. Here He raised from death Jairus' daughter.

But when its inhabitants, swelling with pride and luxury, gave no heed either to His words or His miracles, and would not be moved to repentance, at last He pronounced upon them the sentence, "And thou, Capernaum," &c., chap. xi. 23.

That it might be fulfilled, &c. There is an apposition here. 1. There is the land of Zabulon and Naphtali, which is by the way of the sea. 2. There is the country across the Jordan. And the whole district was called Galilee of the Gentiles. This land, I say, was illuminated by Christ making known the light of the Gospel to them that dwelt therein. The word *Gentiles* here

denotes that Christ was about to transfer the Kingdom of God from the Jews, because of their unbelief, to the Gentiles. So S. Chrysostom.

The people which sat in darkness, &c. I have expounded this prophecy at length in Isaiah ix. 1 : which see.

From that time Jesus began, &c. This was the sum and the scope of the preaching of Christ, to invite men to repentance, to change their course of action, and lead them to a holy life. For this is true wisdom, this our end, our goal, our good, our happiness. Truly says the *Gloss*, "To the Gospel pertains the promise of blessedness, the remission of sins, adoption, resurrection, the heavenly inheritance, the society of angels. By the Gospel, kings are made and a kingdom given, not earthly and transitory, but heavenly and eternal."

Wherefore Babylas, the play-actor, who had two concubines, hearing these words of the Gospel read, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*, being touched by the finger of God, learned wisdom, and shut himself up in a cell, to do penance for the rest of his life. He left his riches to his concubines, but they too, pricked with compunction by his example, also shut themselves up in cells, and did continual penance. (See John Moschus, *Spiritual Meadow*, c. 32.) Verily the word of the Gospel is quick and powerful. (Heb. iv. 12.)

Appositely did Christ preach repentance in Galilee because Galilee is the same as transmigration, say S. Gregory and others, from the root גלה *galah*, "he migrated." For in Galilee Christ taught men in mind, and affection, and love, to migrate from earth to heaven. Wherefore also He chose for apostles none but Galilæans, *i.e.*, migrators, men who were but pilgrims upon earth and citizens of heaven.

This transmigration is accomplished by penitence. How strict, and of how long duration, was the penance upon bread and water in former times! This appears from the Roman Pœnitential, and from the Penitential Canons of SS. Basil, Gregory Nyssen, and Bede, of Rabanus Maurus, and Burchardus, which are still extant.

In Spain, the sick and those about to die did penance, clothed in the monastic habit, and received the tonsure, by which they made profession of a monastic life; and if they afterwards recovered they were bound not to return to the world, but to pass the rest of their life in a monastery. This appears from the Twelfth Council of Toledo, cap. 2. Wamba, king of Spain, a great example to posterity, did this about A.D. 674. (See Mariana, and Baronius, tom. 8, A.D. 680, *in fine*.) For this reason the Pontifical Penitentiaries at Rome carry a rod in their hands, because they are apostolic judges in the tribunal of conscience. For a straight rod is borne before a judge as an emblem of the rectitude of justice, according to that which is said of Christ, Ps. xlv. 7, "A rod of direction is the rod of thy kingdom" (Vulg.); because also in grave and public offences, especially those to which excommunication was annexed, the Penitentiaries, reciting the Psalm *Miserere*, used to beat the guilty person with a rod; and thus they gave absolution, as is appointed even now in the ancient ritual of the Church, sanctioned by the canons, in solemn absolution from excommunication. Thus S. Anno, Archbishop of Cologne, sharply whipped the emperor Henry II. as a penance, A.D. 1056, as can be seen in his life in Surius. And the use of this discipline, as it is commonly called, by rods, inflicted, either by the penitent himself, or by the Penitentiary, was very common in the time of blessed Peter Damian, who flourished A.D. 1040, as is plain from many of his Epistles, also from the life of S. Dominic Loricatus, where he says that a hundred years' penance is performed by reciting the whole Psalter twenty times, accompanied by constant flagellation, for one Psalter so said is equal to five years of penance.

Thus Henry II., King of England, because he had given occasion for the murder of S. Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury, came as a penitent, with bare feet, to the tomb of S. Thomas, and prostrate on the earth, confessed his sin with tears at the feet of the bishops, and, baring his shoulders, received from them five flagellations, and from each of the monks, who were eighty in number, he received three strokes of the rod. This was about

A.D. 1170. What does our delicateness say to this? What has become of the ancient penance?

Let us hear what S. Jerome says of S. Paula in her epitaph. "She did not sleep upon a bed, but upon sackcloth spread upon the bare ground, if, indeed, that could be called sleep which was interrupted by almost continual prayers, day and night, fulfilling the words of the Psalm, "Every night wash I my bed, and water my couch with my tears." You might have thought she was possessed of a fountain of tears; so did she weep over her trifling faults, that you might have imagined her guilty of the most dreadful crimes. Often did we admonish her to have mercy upon her eyes, and preserve them for the reading of the Gospel. But she said, "It is meet that this face should be defiled, which so often, against the command of God, has been adorned with cosmetics and vermilion. It is meet that this body should be afflicted which indulged in so many luxuries. A long laughter shall be recompensed with constant weeping. Soft kerchiefs and precious silks shall give place to rough sackcloth. I who pleased my husband and the world now desire to please Christ" See the same Epistle (30), graphically describing the rare penance of Fabiola.

Jesus walking by the sea, &c. It is not the first vocation of Peter and Andrew which is here recorded. This is related by S. John (i. 36), among the events of the first year of Christ's ministry. The second vocation of Peter and Andrew was after the Baptist's imprisonment, when they surrendered themselves at Christ's call to become His disciples; when they constantly cleave to Him, and never return to their former occupations. This second calling of these Apostles is related both by Matthew and Luke; by the former, compendiously; whilst S. Luke, after his wont, narrates the particulars of the history more at length. So S. Chrysostom.

Walking, not by chance, not merely for recreation, but that He might call to Him Peter and Andrew, James and John. Let Christians, especially priests and religious, strive to imitate Christ, and do nothing aimlessly, but seek fruit in all things.

By the sea of Galilee. Capernaum, where Christ had chosen a house for receiving His disciples was near this lake.

Simon, this is from the Hebrew שמע *soama,* "hearing," "obeying." See what I have said on Gen. xxix. 33.

Andrew is a Greek name, which the Jews after the time of Alexander the Great took from the Greeks, together with such names as Jason, Lysimachus, Menelaus. (See 1 Mac. iv, &c.) Andrew means strong, brave. And such indeed S. Andrew was upon his cross.

Casting a net. We must supply from S. Luke, chap. v., that Christ went up into Peter's ship, and taught the multitudes from thence, that after that He bade Peter cast a net into the sea, which immediately caught a vast number of fishes, so that the net brake, that by this miracle Peter was converted, together with Andrew, James, and John, that then Christ said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men," as S. Matthew here records.

Fishers of men. For Christians are like fishes swimming in the waters of baptism.

> "There are merchandise and nets and ropes:
> Death the reward, virtue the prow, the keel is health above;
> Faith the ropes, true godliness the mast,
> The sail is hope, the oars are grace, the captain is true love."

This is the ship of Christ's Church in which we sail to heaven. I have noticed nineteen analogies between fishes and men, upon Habakkuk i. 14, which if you please you may consult.

Hence Christ is called by the early Christians IXΘΥΣ, a Fish, because its initial letters make this acrostic, Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Υἱός Σώτηρ, or Jesus Christ the Son of God, the Saviour; on which there is extant a verse of the Erythræan Sibyl in S. Augustine (*Civ. Dei,* 18. 23.) See Tertullian (*de Bapt.*), and Prosper (*part. prædict.* 2. 39).

S. Luke says, "From henceforth thou shalt catch men," Gr. ζωγρῶν, *i.e.* take them alive, catch them for life. S. Ambrose translates, "make them live." As though Christ had said, "Fishermen take fishes for death, that they may kill them, but thou, O

Peter, shalt catch men unto life, that they may begin a new life, and live unto God in holiness."

Well does S. Augustine say (*Tract.* 7 *in Joan.*), Christ, wishing to break the nets of the proud, sought not the fisherman by means of the orator, but from the fisherman he gained the emperor. Great is Cyprian the orator, but first was Peter the fisherman. In this was fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah (xvi. 16), "Behold, I will send many fishers, saith the Lord, and they shall fish you."

Leaving their nets. Under the term *nets* understand also ships, houses, occupation, servants, parents, relations, and all other things whatsoever, according to that saying of S. Peter to Christ, "Lo! we have left all things and followed thee." When then we read that after Christ's death the Apostles went a-fishing (John xxi. 3), we do not understand that they again betook themselves to their old vocation, but only did it to pass the time, and to divert their minds from the affliction which they were enduring at the loss of their Master.

Wisely does S. Bernard say to those who fear to follow God's call to high and arduous things, "Why dost thou fear? Why dost thou hesitate? The Angel of great counsel calls thee. No one is wiser than He is; no one is stronger; no one is more faithful."

Tropologically, the scholiast on S. Jerome says, "Let us leave the spiders' nets which are the vanities of the world in which we are held.

And going on from thence, &c. *James,* in Hebrew *Jacob,* a *supplanter;* for he supplanted the world, and all worldly things, that he might follow Christ.

Zebedee, i.e., liberal, munificent. For though he was an old man he willingly gave to Christ his two sons, who were the staff of his old age. זבד *zabad,* means *to give, to bestow.*

John, the grace of God, for Christ poured His grace upon John more abundantly than upon the rest of the Apostles. "By this apostolic chariot of four horses we are carried to heaven; on these four corner-stones the Church was first built."

Ver. 22.—*They straightway*, &c. Observe Luke (v. 11) rolls the vocation of these four Apostles into one; but S. Matthew relates the particulars of the calling: 1, of Andrew and Peter; 2, of James and John. The historical sequence is as follows—Christ having been carried in Peter's boat, and having landed on the shore, then called Peter and Andrew. Going on a little further, he saw James and John mending the nets which had been broken by the miraculous draught of fishes; then He called these two, saying, "Follow me." They, being moved by the miracle, and the example of their partners, straightway left their father and all things, and followed Christ. So S. Augustine (*de Consens. Evan.* lib. 2, c. 17).

And Jesus went about, &c. *Sickness*—Greek, *νόσος*,—an habitual, organic, or incurable disease, says Euthymius. *Disease*—Greek, *μαλακίον*—*i.e.*, *languor, infirmity, failure of strength.*

And his fame. Greek, *ἀκοὴ*—*i.e.*, *rumour, report. Torments* (Gr. *βασάνοις*. This word means, properly, examination under torture, when an accused person was tormented on the *little horse*, to make him confess his crime and accomplices. Lunatics are sick persons, who suffer from the changes of the moon, either by sickness, or delirium, or madness, especially epilepsy. Tho. Valesius (*Sac. Philos.* c. 71) denies that the moon has any such effect.

And healed them. From none of these did Christ require faith, says S. Chrysostom, for He had not yet manifested His power; and those who came from far had as yet but small faith in Him. But afterwards He required faith on the part of the sick, as will appear in the sequel. "Clouds of miracles," says S. Chrysostom, "does S. Matthew pass over in few words, a few of which he afterwards relates more at length."

Mystically, lunatics are mutable and inconstant persons, who at one time serve God and religion, at another the devil and their lusts, according to the words in Ecclus. xxvii. 12—"A holy man abides in wisdom like the sun, but a fool changes like the moon."

Followed him. Hear S. Bernard (*Serm.* 1 *de omnibus Sanc.*): "From the cities and villages the people followed the preaching

of the Lord. He saved their souls; He healed their bodies. They clave to Him, being delighted both by the sight of Him and by His words. His voice was sweet, His face was comely, as it is written, 'Thou art fairer than the children of men; full of grace are thy lips.' Such is He whom we follow, to whom we adhere—who is altogether desirable, upon whom not the people only, but the holy angels themselves desire to look."

Decapolis—i.e., the region of ten cities—from δέκα *ten*, and πόλις, *a city*. The names of these ten cities, according to Burchard, were Tiberias, Saphet, Asor, Kedesh, Cæsarea Philippi, Capernaum, Jotapata (which Josephus defended against the Romans), Beth-saida, Corozaim, and Beth-shan, or Scythopolis.

Beyond Jordan—i.e., in respect of Galilee, which was on this side Jordan. These regions were Gilead, Trachonitis, Abilene, Seir, Cœlosyria, and Batanæa, the ancient Bashan, formerly the dominions of King Og.

CHAPTER V.

3 *Who are blessed.* 14 *The Apostles are a Light to the World.*
21 *The Law expounded.*

AND seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

3 Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

5 Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

6 Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

7 Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

8 Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

9 Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

10 Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

23 Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee,

24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

25 Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery.

28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell.

30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell.

31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have *thy* cloke also.

41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you:

45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the publicans so?

48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Went up into a mountain. Let us inquire what mountain this was? "Some simple brethren," says S. Jerome, "think that Christ taught the Beatitudes, and the things which follow, on the mount of Olives. But that was not so." For from what precedes and follows in the Gospel the place must have been in Galilee; in our opinion Tabor, or a similarly lofty mountain. Geographies of the Holy Land, such as Brochard's *Itinerary*, say that this mountain is called "Mons Christi," because Christ was wont to pray and preach upon it. It lies westward of Capernaum, three miles distant; it is not far from the Sea of Galilee, and is close to the city of Bethsaida. Its height is so great that from it may be seen the land of Zebulon and Naphthali, Trachonitis, Ituræa, Shenir, Hermon, and Libanus. It is carpeted with grass and flowers. Here Christ spent whole nights in prayer. Here He called to Him His disciples, and chose twelve of their number whom He ordained and called apostles. Here He taught that compendium of the new law which is called the Sermon on the Mount. Adrichomius says the stone on which Christ sat to preach may still be seen.

Observe, Matthew wished to commence with the preaching of Christ, and to deliver the sum of it at the beginning of his Gospel, which he did by giving an account of this discourse, although it was actually preached some considerable time after. For many events preceded it, which he relates subsequently. The sequence of the history was as follows:—After Christ had restored the hand of a certain man which was withered, on the Sabbath day (Matt. xii. 15), He fled from the anger of the Scribes, and betook Himself to the Sea of Galilee. Here a vast multitude of people flocked to Him, and after He had healed many who were sick, He went up into a mountain, where He remained the whole night in prayer. In the morning He appointed the twelve Apostles (Luke vi. 12). When He had done this He came down from the top of the mountain to a lower level, and there He delivered the sermon which follows, partly to His disciples and partly to the whole multitude. That the people were present at it is plain from chap. vii. 28. Moreover, that this is the same sermon of which S. Luke gives an account in his sixth chapter is clear, because the general thread of each is the same, and because they have the same commencement and the same conclusion. For although Matthew has eight Beatitudes and Luke only four, yet in the eight of the former are comprised the four of the latter; and in S. Luke's four S. Matthew's eight are contained.

Moreover, Matthew puts off the vocation of the Apostles, which preceded the sermon, to the tenth chapter; for not as yet has he related his own calling by Christ, which he gives in chap. ix. But it is certain that Matthew as well as the other Apostles was present at the sermon. This sermon was delivered about the middle of May, and the choosing of the Apostles had taken place on the morning of the same day, in Christ's thirty-second year, and the second year of His ministry.

And opening his mouth. To *open the mouth* is the Hebrew idiom for *to speak*. But there is an emphasis in the expression in this place. It means that Christ opened out sublime things—things great and wonderful, and Divine mysteries—concerning which He

had hitherto kept silence. So S. Hilary. S. Bernard says, "He opened now His mouth, who afore had opened the mouths of the prophets. Truly was His mouth opened, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Blessed are the poor in spirit. Christ commences His discourse with a Beatitude which all seek and covet, though but few find; as David also begins his Book of Psalms, "Blessed is the man," &c.

Blessed, I say, *are the poor in spirit*, in hope, not as yet of right; blessed are they in the blessedness of the way, not of the country; blessed in the beginning of peace, of virtue, not in the consummation of the crown of glory. Beatitude, says Nyssen, is the special endowment of God; when therefore Christ makes blessed the poor in spirit, He makes them partakers of divinity.

Our Lord alludes here to the words of Moses (Deut. xxxiii. 29), "Blessed art thou, O Israel, what people is like unto thee, who art saved by the Lord?" For the poor in spirit are Israel, the elect people who place their hope, their riches, their salvation and happiness in the Lord. For because they despise the riches of earth, and are lords over them, therefore are they Israel, lords with God and in heaven. Moreover, Isidore (lib. 10, *Orig. litera B.*) says, "Blessed means increased. He is said to be blessed who has what he desires, and does not suffer what he would not. He then is truly blessed who has all good things for which he wishes, and who does not wish for anything which is evil." So also Varro (lib. 4, *de ling. Lat.*), "He is said to be blessed who possesses many good things, as *dives*, 'rich,' comes from *divus*, 'a god,' as one who, like God, wants for nothing." And what are the real goods Christ here shows—poverty of spirit, meekness, holy grief, &c.; for they who have these things are blessed, and therefore they always rejoice. Whence Aristotle derives the Greek word μακάριος, happy, or blessed, from χαίρειν, to rejoice, because he who is blessed is always rejoicing.

These eight Beatitudes are, as it were, the eight paradoxes of the world. For the world and philosophers place blessedness in

wealth, not in poverty, in loftiness, not in humility, &c. Whence S. Ambrose says, "According to the Divine judgment blessedness begins where man deems misery to begin." Says S. Bernard, "The Truth speaks, which can neither deceive nor be deceived. It is the Truth which says, *Blessed are the poor in spirit.* Are ye so senseless, O ye sons of Adam, as so greatly to seek for riches and desire riches, when the Beatitude of the poor has been commended and preached to the world by the mouth of God? Let the heathen, who live without God, seek for riches; let the Jews, who believe in earthly promises, seek them; but with what face can a Christian seek them, after Christ has preached, *Blessed are the poor?*" Gregory Nazianzen too says, "The riches of monks are in their poverty, their possessions in pilgrimage, their glory in contempt, their strength in weakness, their fruitfulness in celibacy; who have nothing in the world, and who live above the world; who, in the flesh, live out of the flesh; who have the Lord for their portion; who, on account of the kingdom, labour in poverty, and, on account of poverty, are kings." When Simeon Stylites was a keeper of sheep, he heard these Beatitudes of Christ read in church, and straightway he left his sheep and entered a monastery. By-and-by he ascended a pillar, and stood upon it, day and night, eating little, and becoming a wonder to the world, that he might attain to these Beatitudes. The same Simeon was wont to preach twice a day to the crowds who flocked to his pillar, saying only these words—"Despise earthly things; love and desire only heavenly things, which alone will make you blessed." So Theodoret, an eye and ear-witness, testifies in his Life of S. Simeon.

Blessed are the poor. Not all poor; not those who are poor by a pitiable necessity against their will; not they who are poor from vain glory, or from a desire to be at liberty for the pursuit of philosophy, like Diogenes, or that Crates of Thebes, who, as S. Jerome says, threw a vast weight of gold into the sea, saying, "Begone, wicked pleasures, I sink you, that I may not be made to sink by you." But it is the poor in spirit who are blessed, who

have a will inspired by the Holy Ghost, tending to spiritual goods. It is poverty voluntarily undertaken for the sake of God and the kingdom of heaven.

Note, there are three sorts of poor. 1. Those who are so actually, as beggars. 2. In spirit, but not actually, as Abraham, who was rich in fact, poor in spirit. 3. Both in fact and in spirit, as the religious, who vow poverty from love and affection for it, and who divest themselves of all their worldly goods. "Do you wish to know," says Nyssen (*lib. de Beatitud.*), "who is poor in spirit? It is he who exchanges corporeal opulence for the riches of the soul, who is poor for the sake of the spirit, who has thrown off earthly riches like a heavy load, and who would be borne aloft through the air to be with God. If, then, it behoves us to advance to the things above, we must needs be poor and needy in the things which drag us down, that we may become conversant with things supernal."

The word *spirit* signifies three things:—1. It is opposed to the flesh, and signifies that the subject of this poverty is not the body, but the spirit—that is to say, the will. In this sense spirit is often used in Scripture. As S. Paul (Rom. i. 9), "God is my witness, whom I serve in the spirit." And Christ says (S. John iv.), "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in *spirit* and in truth"—meaning, that God must be worshipped, not with outward ceremonies, but with the inward spirit, and with devotion of the mind, according to the saying of Cato—

> "If God be Mind, as poets tell,
> Then with the mind we worship well."

So also S. Bernard says, "The poor in spirit—*i.e.*, with the will of the spirit, with spiritual intention and spiritual desire, for the alone sake of pleasing God, and the salvation of souls. And Christ uses this expression, *in spirit*, because of those who are poor by a miserable necessity, not by a laudable will."

2. It is what S. Augustine says, "A rich man, who is able to despise in himself whatsoever there is in him by which pride can be puffed up, is God's poor man." And S. Jerome says, "The

poor in spirit are they who are voluntarily poor because of the Holy Spirit."

3. *In spirit* signifies the end of this poverty—namely, that the contempt of wealth be referred to the spirit, that, being freed from earthly things, we may the better reach forward to heavenly things.

The root and oundation of blessedness and evangelical perfection are voluntary poverty and humility, just as the root of all sin is pride and covetousness."

Admirably says S. Cyprian (*Tract. de Nativ. Christi*), "The poor are elected, the proud neglected. Neither haughtiness nor any such thing obtains a place of discipleship near to Christ. Christ, the poor man, despises rich disciples. A poor mother, a poor son, a poor hospice, give plain evidence to those who are exercised in the school of Christ's Church."

Lastly, S. Bernard (*Serm.* 1 *de Omn. Sanc.*): "Consider how prudently Wisdom hath ordained, appointing the first remedy against the first sin, as though she said plainly, 'Wilt thou obtain heaven which the proud angel lost, he who trusted in his strength and in the multitude of his riches? embrace the lowliness of poverty, and it shall be thine.'"

Anagogically. Francis of Sales, lately Bishop of Geneva, a man equally wise, pious, and holy, says (lib. 12 *Theot.*, c. 2), "The poor, or beggars in spirit are those who beg—*i.e.*, who have an insatiable hunger and thirst for the Spirit—that is, for increase of love and zeal for God, that He may ever grow and burn in them with constant increase."

Hence I have heard the passage expounded thus: *Blessed are the poor in spirit—i.e.*, blessed are they who are towards God as beggars to the rich, namely those who with as great humility of spirit confess their poverty, and with as much earnestness beg for grace from God, as beggars ask an alms from the rich. Whence S. Chrysostom says, beggars teach us how to pray and ask help of God. By showing their wounds and afflicted limbs they excite compassion.

With sound sense does our Lewis (*de ponte, part* 3, *Medit.* 2), give these three degrees of poverty of spirit, that is, of humility. The first is to put off and purify the mind from every blast and breath of vanity, and from all vain and inflated presumption, despising all the pomps of the world. The second, that I should divest myself of all desire to call things my own, by entirely unclothing myself of my own opinions, my own will and other desires. The third and last act of poverty is so to empty myself, make myself so poor that I have nothing at all of my own, but only what God freely gives me. For I have not even so much as *to be*, my own, but it is of God, without whom I am not. Of myself, therefore, I have nothing else than the nothingness of nature—*i.e.*, *not to be*, and the negation of grace—*i.e.*, *sin*.

1. You will inquire whether this poverty of spirit be a precept, or an evangelical counsel? And 2. How many degrees and kinds of it there are? I answer, it has various degrees, some of counsel, some of precept. The first and highest is to forsake all riches, all transitory things for the sake of the love and imitation of Christ, with inward purpose as well as outward deed, like the Apostles and religious. This degree is of counsel, not of precept. The second is to bear patiently the confiscation of goods for the sake of Christ and the orthodox faith, which is a kind of martyrdom; for he who takes away the means necessary for the support of life, takes away life itself. This is what many rich and nobly born Catholics are suffering this day in England, who would prefer death to the spoiling of their goods. For it is a hard thing indeed to deprive not only yourself but your children and all your posterity of their hereditary possessions, and the rank and position of their ancestors, and reduce all to poverty and obscurity. But all the more honour to them who do it for Christ's sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Such, too, were the Hebrew Christians whom the Apostle praises, "Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing that ye have a better and an enduring substance." (Heb. x. 34.)

This degree is of precept, for we are bound for the sake of

Christ and the Faith, not only to lose our goods, but to shed our blood.

The third grade of poverty is to bear patiently the spoiling of our goods, or any injustice done to us by those who are powerful, and tyrants, as when any one loses a just suit on behalf of an estate, or other things, because of the power or tyranny of his opponents.

The fourth is when wealth is given to any one by God, not to care for it, to give it up in intention, to be prepared to forsake it if that should be for the greater glory of God. In this grade was Abraham, rich in respect of actual possessions, but poor in spirit.

5. To prefer to be contented with a little in a station where you have greater opportunities of serving God, than one where you can have more wealth but less godliness.

6. To have wealth, but to spend it upon the poor, and pious objects, even to depriving yourself of necessaries.

7. To prefer to be poor rather than acquire riches by means of injustice, irreligion, or any other wickedness. Such was Tobit, who, when he was dying, left this testimony to his son: "Fear not, my son; we are poor it is true, but we shall have great riches if we fear God." Of these grades of poverty, the second and seventh are of precept; the first, the fourth, and the fifth of counsel; the third and the sixth of counsel, or of precept, according to circumstances.

You will ask, secondly, why Christ assigns to poverty of spirit the first place among the evangelical Beatitudes? I answer, the first reason is *à priori*, because this poverty overturns and destroys covetousness, which is the root and well-spring of all evil. (1 Tim. vi. 10.) Wherefore this poverty restores man, as it were, to the state of innocence, in which nothing was his own, but all things were common to all. For the whole world was Adam's and his children's, that from it they might acknowledge, love, and praise God, there being no assertion of property, which is the root of cupidity, quarrels and law-suits. "With the poor, therefore," says S. Gregory, "what the superfluity of very slight pravity defiles, the furnace of poverty purifies."

The second reason is, because this poverty releases men from a thousand distractions and anxious cares which riches, and the desire of riches, bring with them. Wherefore, "poverty is a tranquil harbour," says S. Chrysostom; "it is the training ground, the gymnasium of wisdom." Here comes in that reason of S. Gregory's (*Hom.* 32 *in Evang.*) that "naked with the naked (demons) we must wrestle; for if one who is clothed wrestle with one who is naked, he will soon be cast down to the ground, because he has that by which he may be laid hold of. For what are all earthly things but bodily habiliments, as it were? Let him, therefore, who is about to contend with the devil cast off his garments lest he be worsted. Let him possess nothing in this world by desire; let him require no delectations of fleeting things, lest, where his desires keep him, there he be held until he fall."

Third. Because this poverty causes a man to withdraw himself from all created things, and makes him rest entirely with all his hopes in God his Creator. In the full and perfect love of God, the summit of virtue and the true blessedness of this life consist.

Wherefore, S. Bonaventura writes, in his Life of S. Francis, that when he was often asked by his brethren which was the virtue which especially commends us to Christ our Lord, and makes us pleasing to Him, he was wont to reply with more than his usual energy, "Poverty, for it is the way of salvation, the incentive to humility, the root of perfection; and from it there spring many fruits, though they be hidden and known to but few."

These are the causes why Christ taught us this poverty of spirit both by word and example. Thus did the Blessed Virgin, the Apostles, the Essenes, yea all the first Christians, of whom it was said (Acts iv. 32), "Neither said any of them that ought which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common." Indeed, they vowed this; wherefore Ananias and Sapphira, who broke this vow, were punished by the Apostle Peter with sudden death.

There followed in holy poverty apostolic men and prelates, SS. Anthony, Augustine, Basil, Chrysostom, Jerome, and S. Alexius, who, by an example uncommon in the world, relinquished ample riches, a bride, and poor and a stranger followed Christ, a poor man, to Syria—as it were, a pilgrim upon earth and a citizen of heaven; and at last lived and died unrecognized in his father's house, being made a laughing-stock to the world, or rather sporting with the world, and making it a laughing-stock. In a later age S. Benedict, S. Bernard, but above all S. Francis, embraced poverty, and taught their disciples to embrace it. S. Francis made it the foundation of his Order. In all his discourses he spoke of it now as his mother, now as his wife, his lady; often, too, he called it his queen, because it had shone with such glorious refulgence in Christ the King of kings, and in His Mother. Hear what he solemnly enjoins upon his friars in his Rule, c. 6: "Let the brothers appropriate nothing to themselves, neither house, nor place, nor anything; but as pilgrims and strangers in this world, serving the Lord in poverty and humility, let them ask boldly for alms. Neither need they be ashamed, for the Lord made Himself poor for us in this world. This is that sublimity of the deepest poverty which constitutes you, my dearest brethren, heirs and kings of the kingdom of heaven. Let this be your portion, which leads you to the land of the living. And, my dearly beloved brethren, cleaving wholly to this, wish, for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to have nothing else for ever under heaven."

The same S. Francis, exulting in destitution, prayed for it with such fervour that fire seemed to shine from his face. "For this," said he, "is the virtue flowing into us from heaven, which so orders and informs us that we gladly trample upon all earthly things, and which removes every obstacle so that the mind of man may be most freely and speedily united to the Lord God. It is poverty which makes a man's soul, while it is yet upon earth, hold converse with the angels in heaven. It is this which has fellowship with Christ on His Cross, which is buried with Him in His

tomb, which with Him rises again and ascends into heaven. It is this which grants to the souls which love it the power, even in this life, of flying above the heavens, and bestows pinions of humility and charity. Let us go forward, then, to ask the holy Apostles that they will obtain this grace for us from the Lord Jesus Christ, that He, the chief cultivator of poverty, would deign to bestow it upon us."

And as S. Francis lived, so he died, for, divesting himself of his outer garments, he lay upon the earth, saying, "I have done with what is mine, what is yours; may Christ instruct you." Then a brother, who stood by, foreseeing by a divine instinct his death and zeal for poverty, offered him his cord with femorals, and said, "These I lend thee, as a beggar, and do thou receive them by the mandate of holy obedience." With joy did the holy man take them, and, lifting up his hands to heaven, gave thanks to Christ, because, having put off every burden, he was going free to Him, and because, as in life, so in death, he was conformed to Christ crucified, who hung naked upon the Cross.

For theirs, &c.—It is just and congruous that those who for the love of Christ despise the riches of the earthly kingdom should be recompensed with the wealth of the heavenly kingdom, yea indeed, of an earthly kingdom, which by despising they possess and rule, according to the saying of S. Paul, "Having nothing, and yet possessing all things." Wherefore Climacus (*Gradu* 17) does not hesitate to affirm that a poor monk is the lord of the world, and through faith possesses all nations as his servants. And he adds that a poor servant of God loves nothing wrongly, for all things which he has, or can have, he reckons as though they were not, and if it chance that they depart, he counts them as dung. Hear S. Bernard (*Serm.* 21 *in Cant.*): "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Let not men suppose that they possess only heavenly things, because they hear them only named in the promise. They possess earthly things likewise, and indeed as though having nothing and yet possessing all things, the less they desire the more are they masters.

Lastly, to a believer there is a whole world of riches. A whole world, indeed, because both prosperous and adverse things are equally his servants, and work together for his good. And so, a covetous man hungers after earthly things like a beggar, the believer despises them as a master. The one by possessing loses, the other by despising keeps. S. Chrysostom gives the reason (*Hom.* 57, *ad pop.*): "God is the poor man's steward." And S. Francis lays it down in his Rule thus: — "This evangelical poverty is the foundation of our Order. On this the whole superstruction of our Order primarily rests, that by its abiding firm, the Order may be firm; and if it be overturned the Order will be entirely overthrown. In so far therefore as the friars shall decline from poverty, the world shall decline from them. If they embrace my Lady Poverty, the world will feed them, because they are sent for the salvation of the world. There is a bargain between the world and the friars. They owe the world a good example: the world owes them necessary provision. And when becoming false to their trust, they fail to set a good example, the world, as a just censure, will draw back its hand." And indeed it is as good as a great and perpetual miracle to see so many religious men and women of the Order of S. Francis—for in the whole world they number quite a million—who have made profession of poverty, who live honestly and suitably on the alms of the faithful. Truly in this does the Providence of God over His own poor shine gloriously. Here is fulfilled that saying of the Psalmist which S. Francis gave to his brothers as their *viaticum* in daily life—"Cast thy care upon the Lord, and He will nourish thou." And "They that be rich, want and are hungry, but they that seek the Lord shall not be lacking in any good."

Observe, Christ does not say *the kingdom of heaven shall be given them*, or *shall* be theirs, but theirs *is* the kingdom of heaven, in this present time. That is to say, "By my promise and God's decree the kingdom of heaven pertains to them, they have a complete right to it, and so they are sure of entering into it, as sure as though they held it in their hands, and were already reigning in it as

kings." For so firm is the hope of the promises of God, that by it the faithful as it were hold in their hands the thing promised, according to Heb. xi. 1, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for," faith, that is, which makes the celestial goods, for which he hopes, subsist in the mind of a believer. For in this way he realizes them to himself, as it were, substantially shows them to himself.

The kingdom of heaven. The celestial blessedness is so called, where the blessed reign with God in all felicity and glory, through all eternity. The word *kingdom* here signifies, 1. The abundance of all good things in heaven. 2. The high dignity wherewith the blessed are honoured by the Holy Trinity and all angels. 3. Their regal dignity. For the blessed are kings, who reign not over one Spain, or one Asia, or even over all the earth, but over the whole universe; that is, over all the elements of the sky, over the plants and animals. This empire they have won by their poverty of spirit, wherewith they put under them all earthly goods and desires, where, wearing their golden crowns, they sing joyfully for ever to Christ. "Thou hast made us to our God a kingdom and priests, and we shall reign upon the earth." (Rev. v. 10, Vulg.) The kingdom of heaven then is the kingdom of God, for the blessed possess the same kingdom which God himself possesses, and in it most happily and most gloriously reign with him eternally.

Blessed are the meek. This is the second Beatitude in the Latin Vulgate followed by SS. Jerome and Augustine, and the rest of the Latin Fathers. But in the Greek Codices, in the Syriac and Arabic versions, followed by S. Chrysostom and the other Greek Fathers it is the third Beatitude, the second with them being, *Blessed are they that mourn.*

Congruously to the poor in spirit the meek are joined because the poor and lowly are wont to be meek, as *vice versâ* the rich are proud and often impatient and quarrelsome. Poverty and meekness are neighbours, and related virtues. Whence the Hebrew words עני *ani*, "poor," ענ *anan*, "meek," are kindred words.

Chromatius adds, "A man cannot be meek unless he be first poor in spirit." He gives the reason, "There cannot be a calm sea unless the winds are stilled. A fire is not put out unless you withdraw the materials by which it burns. So too the mind will not be meek and quiet unless the things which excite and inflame it be put away." The meek are they who are gentle, humble, modest, simple in faith, patient under all injury, who set themselves to follow the precepts of the gospel and the example of the saints. Christ here alludes to Ps. xxxvii. 11, "The meek-spirited shall possess the earth, and shall be refreshed with the multitude of peace." Meekness, therefore, 1. Makes us pleasing to God and men. 2. Like Christ, who says, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." 3. Apt for wisdom and gaining celestial goods. For these the meek heart is fitted to receive, according to what the Psalm says, "Them that are meek shall he guide in judgment, and such as are gentle them shall he learn his way."

The grades of meekness and the Beatitude consequent upon it are these: 1. To converse with all with a meek heart and lips. 2. To break the anger of others by a meek reply. 3. To bear with gentleness all injuries and wrongs. 4. To rejoice in such things. 5. By our meekness and kindness to overcome the malevolence of our enemies and those who are angry with us, and win them to be our friends.

For they shall possess, &c. Gr. κληρονομήσουσι, *i.e.*, *shall possess by inheritance*. S. Augustine and the Arabic have *shall inherit*. The Syriac, *shall possess the earth by the right of inheritance*. Appositely does Christ promise the earth to the meek, because the meek are often despoiled by the quarrelsome of the goods of the earth. This injury therefore Christ makes up to them by this Beatitude. But what earth does He mean?

1. S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, Theophylact, and S. Augustine, say that the present earth is here promised to the meek, in this way. The world calls blessed those who are strong and who avenge themselves; but I say, Blessed are the meek, and they who bear with patience the good things of this world being torn

from them, because although such persons are often oppressed by the world, yet they do often also, by the gift of God, possess their own, firmly and quietly. Or if not, yet the whole world is the meek man's country. There is an allusion to Moses who was the meekest of men, and who by his meekness obtained for the Hebrews from God the possession of the promised land. This sense is true, but neither full nor adequate. It often fails. We often see the meek deprived of their possessions by the quarrelsome. We may add that Moses promised earthly goods to the Jews, but Christ promised heavenly things to Christians.

Better and fuller with S. Jerome (*in loc.*), Nyssen (*lib. de Beat., Orat.* 2), S. Basil (on Psalm xiv.), Cyril (*in cap.* 58 *Isaiah*), by earth in this place, understand heaven, which is the land of the living, as this our earth is the land of the dying, as it is said in Psalm xxvii. "I believed verily to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." And Psalm cxlii., "Thou art my hope and my portion in the land of the living."

For in heaven, indeed, is a land not dense, opaque, and earthy, but pure and lustrous. There is the Paradise of roses and lilies, of gems and all delights which refresh the senses of the blessed, for were it not so, the bodies and senses of the blessed, which in this life suffered such dire and awful martyrdoms, would go without their own deserts of pleasure, and only their minds and souls be blessed, which is absurd. Whence S. John beheld (in Rev. xxi. and xxii.) a heavenly city which was foursquare, whose foundations were laid with jasper and every precious stone. Hence also the Pythagoreans, as Clement of Alexandria tells us (lib. 5 *Stromat.*), speak of heaven as ἀντίχθονα, *i.e.*, the land over against, or opposed to our earth. I say nothing of those philosophers who think that the moon and the stars are inhabited, that there are in the moon populous cities and vast regions inhabited by men called *Lunares*, from *Luna*, as Macrobius says, lib. 1 *in Somn. Scipionis*. See also what Plato says, *in Convivio*.

By every one of the Beatitudes the kingdom of heaven is promised, but under various names and titles.

And yet again, by *earth* in this place we may understand the *new earth*, which is spoken of (Isa. lxv. 17; Rev. xxi. 1, 2; and 2 Pet. iii. 13) as that globe of the world which is to be subjected to Christ after the general Judgment, as His inheritance, and therefore to the meek as His fellow heirs. For after the Judgment, the whole universe—that is, both the heavens and the earth—will be renewed and glorified, and made the possession of Christ and His saints.

A certain holy man, says Salmeron, once said, pleasantly, "Heaven is given to the humble, and earth to the meek; what remains to the proud and the cruel except the misery of hell?"

Anagogically, Hilary says, "To the meek is promised the inheritance of the earth—*i.e.* of that body which the Lord assumed as his habitation, because through the meekness of our minds Christ dwelleth in us, and we also, when we are glorified, shall be clothed with the glory of His body." And S. Leo (*Serm. in Fest. Omn. Sanct.*) says, "The land promised to the meek, and to be given in possession to the gentle, is the flesh of the saints, which, as the desert of their humility, shall be changed at the blessed Resurrection, and endowed with the grace of immortality. For the meek shall possess that land in perfect peace, and nothing shall ever be diminished of their rights, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality."

Finally, the way of attaining to meekness is (1), often to meditate upon its dignity and profit, and upon the unworthiness and unprofitableness of anger. Whence Clement of Alexandria says, that Athenodorus gave this advice to the Emperor Augustus, that if he were angry he should never do or say anything until he had said over to himself the twenty-four letters of the alphabet. "If," said he, "thou art of a lofty mind, a prince is superior to all injuries." Augustus despised the tales of detractors, "For," said he, "in a free State the tongue should be free."

A better way is, to consider the example of those who are meek, and to follow them, but especially the example of Christ

crucified, of whom Isaiah foretold (chap. liii.), "He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb before its shearers, he shall make himself dumb."

Blessed are they that mourn. Arabic, *the sad*, who mourn, not in flesh but in spirit. For the words, *in spirit*, are to be understood and repeated in all these Beatitudes. Blessed are they that mourn, not for the loss of wealth, or parents, or friends, but of spiritual things. Grief here is taken as belonging to the saints. It is opposed to those who laugh and overflow with joy on account of mundane prosperity, those whom the world applauds as blessed. To them Christ threatens *woe.* "Woe to you which laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep." There is an allusion to Isaiah lxv. 14, "Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed," &c.

This grief too has its own degrees, like the rest of the Beatitudes. They are here called *blessed mourners*, who bear with patience the troubles and sorrows sent, or permitted to come upon them by God. So Nyssen, *de Beatitud.* But more blessed are they who mourn and weep on account of their own or others' sins. And most blessed are they who through grief at the perpetual struggle which they carry on with the flesh and concupiscence, and through desire of the celestial country, and especially through love of God and Christ, lament their exile in this earthly land. Thus Paul mourned, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" In this grief S. Ephraim excelled, who mourns in all his writings, and inspires his readers with holy grief and compunction. S. Macarius, as his Life records, was wont to say to his brethren, "Let us weep, brothers, let our eyes run down with tears before we go where our tears shall burn our flesh." And they all wept. For tears wash us in this world but burn us after death.

For they shall be comforted. Often in this life, but always in the life to come. As Isaiah says (xxxv. 10), "Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and

sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Truly does compunction itself wonderfully solace and refresh the mind of him who is pricked with compunction. And if there be unadulterated joy in the world, it is in the contrite mind. Taste, and thou shalt see, for as the heart knoweth his own bitterness, so there is a joy with which a stranger intermeddleth not. So S. Jerome describing the departure of S. Paula, exclaims, "O blessed exchange! She wept to laugh always: she beheld pools of contrition that she might find the Lord her fountain: she was clothed in sackcloth that now she might wear white robes, and say, 'Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.' She ate ashes as it were bread, and mingled her drink with weeping, saying, 'My tears have been my meat day and night,' that now she might feed for ever on angels' bread, and sing, 'O taste and see how sweet the Lord is.'"

Blessed are they that hunger, &c. The meaning both here and in S. Luke, who omits *after righteousness*, is the same. Blessed are they who hunger after food and drink, in a spiritual sense, *i.e.*, not from any bodily necessity, but with a spiritual end and intention. They hunger and thirst after righteousness, because they wish by such hunger to increase righteousness in themselves and their neighbours. Maldonatus explains righteousness or justice (*justitiam*) to mean, *on account of justice*. Hence S. Luke (vi. 5) opposes these hungry ones to such that are full, *sc.* with wine and delicacies. *Woe to you that are full, for ye shall hunger.* The world calls blessed those that are full, but I, says Christ, call those who are hungry and thirsty with maceration of the flesh, so long as it is on account of their eagerness to obtain and augment righteousness, happy. So S. Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, Hilary, Nyssen, Euthymius, Theophilus, and others. Thus hunger, or famine, is to be understood not in a corporeal, but a spiritual sense (Amos viii. 11): "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will send a famine upon the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the word of the Lord." Also Ecclus. xxiv. 29: "They that eat me

(wisdom) shall yet be hungry, and they that drink me shall yet be thirsty." To these words Christ here alludes.

The 1st degree of this Beatitude is to bear patiently hunger or thirst arising from public or private scarcity of food. The 2nd, to hunger and thirst in voluntary fasting, that by your fasting, you may make satisfaction for your sins, and gain the grace of God for yourselves and your neighbours. The 3rd is, for the faith of Christ to endure prisons, and in them hunger and thirst, even unto death, as befell some of the martyrs. The 4th, to hunger and thirst after righteousness, and the increase of all virtue. Whence S. Leo says, "To love God is nothing else than to love righteousness."

Righteousness. 1. Righteousness or justice may here be taken for that special virtue which gives to every one their right. As if it were said, "Blessed are they who hunger for justice, who eagerly desire that justice which once fled from the world, according to that verse of Ovid,

> "Last, the lands, all wet with slaughter,
> Left Astræa, Heaven's own daughter,"

that she may return again to earth, and rule over the whole world, and defend the right. Such are they who, oppressed by tyrants, or unjust men, desire that their rights may be restored. Such are they who see widows and orphans oppressed, and have an ardent longing to see them rescued from injustice, and their oppressors punished. For as Aristotle (*Ethics*) says, "Neither the evening star, nor the sun shines as brightly as justice." And as Cicero says (lib. 2 *de Offic.*), "So great is the force of justice, that not even those who feed on evil-doing and wickedness can live in them without some particle of justice."

2. And more fully, take righteousness here to mean a generic term for virtue, yea, the circle of all virtues, because, for it we ought not only to wish, but vehemently to hunger after and covet it, that we may fill our soul with virtues.

Hear what S. Bernard says (*Epist.* 253 *ad Garinum*), explaining the insatiable desire of profiting in the righteous. "The just

man never deems that he has apprehended, never says it is enough, but is always hungering and thirsting after righteousness; so that if he lived always, he would be always striving, as far as in him lies, to be more just, always endeavouring with all his might to go on from good to better, not merely for a year or some set time, like a hireling, but for ever he would surrender himself to the Divine service. Therefore unwearied zeal in making progress, and constant striving after perfection, is counted perfection." And then he concludes with a reference to Jacob's ladder.

"Jacob beheld a ladder, and on the ladder angels, but none of them resting or standing still; but all were either ascending or else descending; whereby is given plainly to understand that in the state of this mortal life there can no middle course be found between going forward and going back. For just as our body is perpetually either increasing or decreasing, so also must the soul be either making progress or else going backward."

Well says S. Augustine, "The whole life of a good Christian is holy desire."

For they shall, &c. "God will give here a constant increase of His grace to those who hunger after it." "And in heaven," says S. Bernard, "eternal hunger shall be recompensed with eternal refection."

Blessed are the merciful. Mercy is joined to justice because every work of virtue is either of debt, which is justice, or else of free gift, which is mercy, and because mercy tempers and sweetens justice. Worldlings count those blessed who give little and receive much: but Christ pronounces a paradox, which yet is most true, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts xx. 35), where I have gone fully into the reasons of this Beatitude, especially this one, "for they shall obtain mercy."

The same celestial Beatitude which Christ promised to the poor in spirit, under the name of *the kingdom of heaven*, He here promises to the merciful by the name of *mercy*, because, as the Apostle says (Rom. vi. 23), "life eternal is of grace," both because God

promises it freely to those who do well and give alms, as because grace is the beginning of good works and merit. For grace prevents and stirs us up to good works, and gives them a divine worthiness and power of meriting. "Life eternal," says S. Augustine (*de Corrept. et Gratiâ*, c. 13), "is grace for grace—that is, grace for the merits which grace has conferred," according to that in Ps. ciii., "Who crowneth thee with mercy and compassions" (Vulg.). Whence the Syriac renders, *Blessed are the merciful, for mercies shall be upon them.* As though He said, *To the merciful shall be recompensed, not one but many mercies.* God, therefore, bestows upon the merciful life and everlasting glory, which is the highest grace, and is here signified by the name of mercy, for, as S. Augustine says (*Epist.* 105), "When God crowns our merits, He does nothing else than crown His own gifts."

The degrees of mercy are: 1. To sympathize with the wretched. 2. To alleviate corporeal misery by alms. 3. To bring succour to the ignorance of the mind, or to those who are burdened with sin. 4. To seek out the wretched, that we may help them. 5. To deprive yourself of advantages in order to succour them. 6. To spend all you are and all you have, even life itself, for them, as Christ, S. Paul, and S. Paulinus did.

Symbolically. Mercy—*i.e.*, the vision and possession of God, and God Himself, is promised. For the nature of God is nothing else than mercy, according to the words of the fifty-ninth Psalm, "My God my mercy." (Vulg.) Give therefore to the poor, and you receive God. For alms is not so much mercy as a vast interest and usury with God. Whence the saying: "If you wish to be a usurer lend to God." As it is in Proverbs, "He that giveth unto the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and what he layeth out it shall be paid him again." As S. Chrysologus says (*Serm.* 42), "God eateth the bread in heaven which the poor man hath received on earth. Give, then, your bread, give your drink, if you would have God for your debtor instead of your judge." Powerfully writes S. Augustine (on Ps. xxxvii.), "Consider what the usurer does: he wishes to give little and gain much. Do thou the same. Give

small things, receive great. Behold how wonderfully your interest grows. Give temporal things, receive eternal. Give earth, receive heaven." Lastly, S. Chrysostom *(Hom. 32 in Epist. ad Heb.)* says, "Almsgiving is a virgin who hath golden wings, and is seen of all. She hath a beautiful girdle. Her face is gentle and comely. Her carriage is graceful, and she always stands before the throne of the King. When we are judged, straightway she comes to our aid, and delivers us from punishment, overshadowing us with her wings. God Himself loves her better than innumerable sacrifices."

Blessed are the pure in heart. 1. A pure heart means a chaste mind, free from all lust and carnal concupiscence. As though He said, Blessed, not those who have a clear intellect, as philosophers, nor yet those who have clean and fashionable clothes, which many cannot have, but who have a pure and chaste mind which all can have. So. S. Chrysostom.

2. And more fully: Blessed are those who have a pure conscience—those, namely, who have cleansed it from every stain of sin, from evil thoughts and desires, from passions and perturbations, from all evil intention, and especially from all duplicity and hypocrisy. Thus if a fountain be pure and unmuddy, so will the waters which flow from it be pure and unmuddy likewise; and if the heart be pure, the actions which spring from it will be pure and clean. So S. Jerome.

3. And most fully: They are in the highest grade of purity of heart, who have cleansed their hearts from all creature love, that their hearts may be like that of an angel—a pure mirror—and shrine of the Deity.

Cassian (lib. 6 *de Instit. Renunc.*, c. 10) gives it as a mark of perfect purity of heart when any one has no impure dreams, but all his visions are pure and holy. Moreover, Cassian and Sulpitius, (lib. 4 *Vit. Pat.*, c. 31) describe the ladder by which we may mount by degrees to this purity. "The beginning of our salvation is the fear of the Lord. Of the fear of the Lord is born wholesome compunction. From compunction proceedeth contempt of

possessions, and divesting ourselves of them. From this divesting proceeds humility. Of humility is generated mortification of the will. By mortification of the will all vices are rooted out. When vices are expelled, virtues fructify and increase. By the growth of virtues purity of heart is gained. By purity of heart the perfection of apostolic charity is possessed."

Wherefore S. Anthony, according to S. Athanasius, teaches that purity of heart is the way to prophecy. "If any one would be in a position," he says, "to know future events, let him have a clean heart, for I believe that the soul which serves God, if it shall persevere in that wholeness in which it has been born again, is able to know more than the demons. Such was the soul of Eliseus, who was wont to perform miracles unknown to others."

For they shall see God—i.e., face to face, and shall be blessed with the vision of God. "Cleanness of heart, and purity of conscience," says Chromatius, "will suffer no cloud to obscure the vision of God." Hear S. Leo (*Serm. in Fest. Omn. Sanct.*): "Let all the mists of earthly vanities pass away, and let the interior eyes be cleansed from all squalor of iniquity, that the purified sight may feed only upon the vision of God." Hence it is plain, as S. Augustine says, that God is seen by the blessed, not with the eyes, but with the heart—*i.e.*, with the mind.

Lastly, this vision of God may be understood to mean the pure and affectionate knowledge which He often imparts in greater degree in this life to the pure in heart than to others. Let, then, every one say, with Herminius, "I had rather die than be defiled in heart."

Blessed are the peacemakers. As though Christ said, The world calls blessed those who bravely wage war, and subdue their enemies, but I pronounce those to be blessed who reconcile those who quarrel and fight, and recall them to peace and union among themselves and with God. This, indeed, is a work arduous and difficult, but one most pleasing to God. So S. Chrysostom, &c. (See S. Gregory, 3 p. *Pastor. Admonit.* 24.)

The degrees of this Beatitude are—1. To have or procure in-

ward peace of soul with God. 2. To cultivate peace with neighbours and friends. 3. To recall those who disagree to the concord of charity. The 4th grade is to make others like ourselves, by instilling into them a zeal for peace, that they too may study to make peace between those who disagree.

There might be a religious order or congregation instituted to promote this object, with great profit to the Church, in the same way that congregations have been instituted for the promotion of the other works of mercy—such as nursing the sick, showing hospitality to strangers, burying the dead, &c. Similarly, there might be founded a congregation of peacemakers, whose office it would be to quell all lawsuits in a city, and to bring back all who quarrelled to concord and charity. For this is an exemplary work of charity, in which one Father (Gaspar Barzaus, of Goa) so excelled, that the lawyers said they should die of hunger, in consequence of his putting an end to all the litigations by which they gained a living. (See his Life, written by Father Trigantius.) In fact, in some cities, such congregations of peacemakers have been founded, by which much harm arising from discords, strifes, hatreds, has been warded from the commonwealth.

For they shall be called, &c., *i.e., they shall be sons of God.* For God very greatly loveth peace, and for its sake He sent His Son into the world. For He Himself is in His essence peace and union: for God Himself unites and joins in closest union the Three Divine Persons in one and the same undivided Essence and Godhead. Hence God is called the God of peace (Philip. iv.); as, on the contrary, the devil is a god of contention, and they who sow it are sons of the devil.

2. Peacemakers are called the sons of God, because they share in the name and office of Christ the Son of God, whose office it is to reconcile men to God and one another, and to bring to the world that peace which the world cannot give. Whence His name is the Prince of Peace. (Isaiah ix. 6.)

3. Most properly and most fully, the peacemakers shall be

called and shall be sons of God and heirs of God in celestial glory, which they shall inherit as the reward of their efforts to make peace. For in heaven all the Saints are, through the beatific glory, sons and heirs of God. "These are the peacemakers," says S. Leo (*Serm. in Fest. Omn Sanc*); "these who are of one mind, who shall be called by an everlasting title sons of God, and co-heirs with Christ, for this shall be the reward which love of God and our neighbour shall win, that it shall feel no adversity, fear no scandal, but, all the contest of temptation being finished, it shall rest in the most tranquil peace of God."

Blessed are they which are persecuted, &c. This is the eighth and chief Beatitude, subsisting in suffering and patience, whereas the others were placed in action. Whence S. Ambrose says, "He leads thee to the end. He brings you up to martyrdom, and there He fixes the palm of the Beatitudes." For it is more difficult to suffer hard things than to do difficult things, according to the saying, "To act bravely is the part of a Roman, to suffer bravely is the part of a Christian."

Acutely and subtilly does Nyssen (on the Beatitudes) trace out the etymology of *persecution*, which is a word used of those who run and follow, and strive to surpass those who are before them in a race. And so Nyssen meditates thus, that a holy man and tribulation, or persecution, as it were, are running together, but that when he does not give in to persecution, he, as the victor, runs in front, but persecution follows behind his back, and for that reason is called persecution; because, saith he, their enemies follow the righteous, but do not overtake them, for they are overcome by the patience and constancy of the righteous.

For righteousness' sake. Because they are just, because they are Christians, because they follow after justice, because they keep the law of God, or the statutes of their Order, or defend the property and rights of the Church, and stand up for the rights of orphans, or because they are zealous for the reformation of the clergy or their monastery. For righteousness here has a wide signification, and embraces every kind of virtue, says S. Chrysostom.

Although, indeed, some philosophers seem to have suffered and been killed for the sake of righteousness, as Socrates was put to death because he said, "Many gods ought not to be worshipped but one God only;" yet where there is not true faith nor charity, there neither is true and perfect righteousness, says S Augustinc.

1. Blessed, then, are they who suffer for righteousness' sake, because persecution separates us from the world, and unites us to God. 2. Because we suffer it for the sake of God. 3. Because by this we become like Christ, who all His life long, unto the death of the Cross, was persecuted by the Jews. "Let us therefore go forth without the camp, bearing his reproach." (Heb. xiii.) The Church has always increased in time of persecution, decreased in prosperity. So too with all the religious orders.

For this cause God sends, *i.e.*, permits, persecution to come upon the faithful, clergy or religious, to cut down the vices which, like tares, spring up in a time of peace, and revive the primitive vigour of virtue. In this way, under the two Philips, Christian Emperors of Rome, the virtue of the faithful languished in peace, and Christians gave themselves up to gluttony, avarice, and pride. Then God sent the Emperors Decius and Valerian, who sharpened the virtue of believers by persecution. This was revealed to S. Cyprian, as he himself declares (lib. 4, *Epist.* 4), "Ye may know that this reproof was given by a vision, that we were sleeping in our prayers. This persecution is the trial and examination of our sins." And *(Serm. de Laps.)*, "A long peace had corrupted the discipline delivered unto us: heavenly correction has raised up prostrate and all but slumbering faith: there was no devoted religion among the clergy, no inward faith in their ministrations, no mercy in works, no discipline in morals," &c. Eusebius gives the same reason for the persecution under Diocletian. *(Hist.* lib. 8, c. 1.)

Wherefore B. Francis Borgia, the third General of the Jesuits, was wont to say, there are three things which preserve the Society of Jesus: 1. The study of prayer. 2. The union of the

members among themselves. 3. Persecution. And he gives the reasons. Prayer binds us closely to God; concord unites the brethren with one another; persecution separates us from the world, and compels us to act with prudence, that our persecutors may have no handle against us.

For theirs, &c. He begins the Beatitudes with the kingdom of heaven, and He ends them there. He assigns it to the first and last Beatitudes, that we may understand that it is implied in the intervening six. S. Ambrose, indeed, thinks that the heavenly kingdom is a promise to the poor in spirit, *quoad* the soul, which presently migrates from death to heaven; but to those who suffer persecution, *quoad* the body, which shall be endowed with eternal glory in heaven after the Resurrection. Beautifully and accurately does S. Augustine (*Ps.* 94) make God speak thus, "I have something for sale." "What, O Lord?" "The kingdom of heaven." "How is it to be purchased?" "The kingdom by poverty, joy by sorrow, rest by labour, glory by vileness, life by death."

Note, 1. That these eight Beatitudes are all connected among themselves. Nor, indeed, is any one blessed who has the first, unless he has the other seven likewise. That I may say all in a word, it is, Blessed are they who despise the good things of this world through poverty of spirit, and its honours through meekness, and its pleasures through mourning, who moreover follow hard after justice and mercy, and come to purity of heart; those also who labour to make others have peace with God and among themselves, and finally who, because of these and other works of righteousness, suffer persecution, for this is the apex of Christian perfection and blessedness.

Again, the first Beatitude disposes to and becomes a step to the second, the second to the third, and so on, as S. Ambrose, Leo, and others teach. For poverty of spirit or humility disposes to meekness, for the humble are meek; meekness disposes to mourning, for the meek soon perceive their own and others' afflictions. Grief or compunction disposes to hungering and thirsting after

righteousness. Thirsting after righteousness disposes to mercy, for he who desires to increase in righteousness and holiness does works of mercy. Mercy disposes to purity of heart, because almsdeeds quench sin as water does fire, and increase the charity which loves God alone with a pure heart. Purity of heart disposes us both to be at peace with ourselves, and to promote peace among others, since strifes and wars arise from a heart which is impure and full of covetousness. Lastly, those who promote peace and the other virtues spoken of, fall under the hatred of many who are depraved and covetous, and are persecuted by them, which persecution they nobly endure, and so perfect the crown of these eight Beatitudes, and crown themselves with it.

Observe, lastly, how S. Augustine (lib. 1 *de Serm. Dom. in Mont.)* beautifully compares the seven Beatitudes to the seven gifts of the Spirit. The fear of God is consonant to the humble, piety to the meek, wisdom to mourners, strength to the hungry and thirsty, counsel to the merciful, understanding to the pure in heart, wisdom to the peacemaker.

Blessed are ye when men shall revile (Gr. ὀνειδίσωσι) *you*, &c. Because, *i.e.*, ye follow My faith, My morals, My life. *Falsely* (Syr. *in a lie*), because, forsooth, they falsely accuse you as disturbers of the public, innovators, superstitious for making a God of a crucified man, and worshipping Him. This, therefore, is the summit of beatitude, to suffer patiently and generously—yea, joyfully—all wrongs and injuries for the sake of Christ, for piety and virtue's sake.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, &c. Rejoice in calumnies, in false accusations, in persecutions, for, 1. By them ye are blessed. 2. Because there awaits you an ample reward in heaven. 3. Because ye are like the prophets, such as Isaiah, who, on account of his prophecies, was sawn asunder by Manasseh with a saw; Jeremiah, who was stoned by the Jews to death; and the rest of the prophets, who were almost all put to death in one way or another. He animates His own disciples by the example of the prophets,

because by sharing their lot in suffering persecution they were about to become sharers in their society and glory. By this Christ tacitly intimates that they succeeded to the place of the prophets, yea, were superior to them, because they were called to loftier things, to preach, not the Law, but the Gospel, not only to the Jews, but to the whole world. Wherefore He subjoins, *Ye are the salt of the earth*, &c.

Observe here, as against modern heretics, the word *reward* (Gr. μισθὸς, *hire, wages*, Lat. *merces*) from whence we collect the merit of good works. For the merit is merit of reward, and the reward is the reward of merit.

Listen to S. Cyprian (lib. 4, *Epist.* 6): "The Lord hath willed us to rejoice and exult in persecution, because when the persecutions are accomplished, then are given the crowns of faith, then the soldiers of God are approved, then the heavens are opened to the martyrs."

Thus did S. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, exult, when sent to Rome. Bravely and with alacrity he entered the amphitheatre, and looking round upon the vast multitude of at least a hundred thousand people, he saluted them in a friendly manner, and said, "Do not think, O ye Romans, that I am here condemned to the wild beasts on account of any evil deed, for I have committed none, but because I desire to be united to Christ, for whom I insatiably thirst." And when he heard the lions roaring he said, "I am the corn of Christ, let me be ground by the teeth of the beasts, that I may be found pure bread." Read his Epistle to the Romans, in which he begs, and as it were conjures, them, not to hinder his martyrdom nor take away his crown from him. "I wish to enjoy the beasts which are prepared for me. If they will not come to me I will use force. Now I begin to be a disciple of Christ."

This is the thought which S. James proposes to be as it were the theme of his Epistle: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;" where I have said a good deal upon this subject.

Ye are the salt, &c. That is, you, O ye Apostles, who are sitting here next to Me, to whom I have spoken primarily the eight Beatitudes—*ye are*, by My election and appointment (for I have chosen and appointed you unto this) *the salt of the earth*, *i.e.*, ye ought to be, and by My grace ye shall be. Christ passes from the Beatitudes to salt, because He delivers His moral teaching after the manner of the ancients, by short, separate maxims, and because the connection here may be easily traced. You, O Apostles, whom I choose to be, after My example, humble, meek, &c., shall, in so being, be the salt of the world.

You ask why does Christ call His Apostles the salt of the earth rather than the gold, or silver, or precious stones? I answer, because salt is a thing universally necessary and useful. Salt is as it were the balsam of nature, which preserves and seasons almost all things with which it is mixed, and keeps them from corruption. Thus the Apostles were the salt, *i.e.*, the balsam of the earth.

2. Salt denotes the office, power, and dignity of the Apostles. For salt is the symbol of wisdom. For as salt seasons food and makes it savoury, so does wisdom season the mind and make it wise. Thus in Latin a foolish man is called a man without salt (*insulsus*) or unsalted, according to the verse of Catullus—

"Not one grain of salt in so big a body."

The Apostles therefore were salt because they corrected the unsavoury morals of the world, and made them wise and savoury.

3. Salt, says Pliny (lib. 31, c. 10), contains two elements, of an igneous and watery nature—igneous because it is sharp, like fire, and if it be cast into fire it makes it flare up; and if salt be cast into water it is dissolved in it. The same Pliny adds (c. 9) that there is nothing more beneficial to the body than salt. The Apostles therefore were the salt of the earth, because by their igneous force they kindled it with the love of God, and by their aqueous flow of words and their wisdom they watered its dryness as with a spiritual dew, and made it fruitful, that it should bring forth the fruit of good works and all virtues.

4. Salt flavours insipid food, and by its pungency renders it pleasant and wholesome. Thus the Apostles have emended the insipid and foolish opinions, mistakes, and customs of men by their forcible language, and made them pleasing to God and the angels.

5. As salt penetrates flesh, and preserves it from corruption by drying up the humours by which flesh is corrupted, so have the Apostles taken away from the minds of men the corruption of fleshly concupiscences, and preserved them for the immortality of everlasting incorruption. So Cicero (lib. 2 *de Nat. Deorum*) says, "What hath a sow besides its flesh? Chrysippus says that a soul hath been given it for salt, lest it should corrupt." Thus to men who, like sows, were wallowing in flesh and blood, God hath given the Apostles, as it were salt and a soul, which might spiritually animate them, lest they should putrefy.

6. Salt excites thirst. So the Apostles have excited a thirst for heavenly things. Hear S. Hilary: "The Apostles are the preachers of heavenly things and, as it were, sowers of eternity: they bring immortality to all upon whom their speech is sprinkled." Or Euthymius: "Ye have been chosen by Me to cure all the putridity of the world: ye are the salt of the earth."

7. Salt, by its pungency, bites and pricks, dries and burns. Listen to Pliny (lib. 31, c. 7): "The nature of salt is igneous, and yet an enemy to fire. Putting it to flight, it dries substances and binds them together. But salt has such power over dead and putrescent substances that by its means they will endure for ages." Thus, too, the Apostles, by their sharp and fiery speech, and by their life, have bitten, pricked, dried up, and shaken off the vices of men. Hear S. Gregory (*Hom.* 17): "If we are salt, we ought to season the minds of the faithful. As is among brute beasts a rock of salt, so ought to be a priest among the people, that whosoever is joined to a priest, he may be seasoned, as if from a rock of salt, with the seasoning of eternal life." Let priests read that entire homily of S. Gregory's, and they will find it a golden mirror for their life, that they may be the salt of the earth.

Wisely saith S. Chrysostom, "Do you wish to know if the people of any place are righteous? Look what sort of a pastor they have. If you find him pious, just, sound, believe the people will be the same, for they are seasoned with the salt of his wisdom."

But if the salt have lost his savour, &c. If an apostle, if a bishop, if a priest—who ought, like salt, to season the morals of others—shall, through gluttony, uncleanness, fear, or flattery, lose the vigour of his spiritual salt, who shall restore it to him? No one. This may be seen in the case of some of the priests and pastors of the past age, who either led scandalous lives, or else were ignorant and negligent in instructing the people wandering in, or verging upon, heresy. Whence the ecclesiastical order came into sad contempt, whence the heresies of Luther, Calvin, and the rest sprung up, who, says Maldonatus, are like unto unsavoury bugs: when they are alive they bite, when dead they give out an offensive smell.

Trodden under foot, &c. "For it is not he who suffers persecution," says S. Augustine, "who is trodden under foot of men, but he who is so foolish as to fear persecution. For only an inferior can be trodden down; but an inferior he cannot be whose heart is fixed in heaven, although his body may suffer many things upon earth."

Although salt be of an igneous nature, yet it dissolves if it be mingled with water. A good religious priest too is dissolved and becomes effeminate, if he associate too much with women, even pious ones. Hear what the Elder, cited by John Moschus, says in his *Spiritual Meadow*, c. 217: "My little children, salt is of water; and if it approach water, forthwith it fails and is dissolved. A monk suffers the same from a woman; and if he approach a woman, he too is dissolved, and comes to such a pass that he is no more a monk."

So too does a priest come to naught if he be too accommodating to people of the world. Let him remember that he ought to be salt, and preserve his vigour, gravity, and liberty in rebuking vices. Let him not be ashamed to profess openly that he

is an ecclesiastic and a religious, that is, a worshipper of God, a spiritual person, a despiser of the world, a lover of heavenly things. "Let him enter with another man's, let him go out with his own," says our S. Ignatius. That is, in the beginning, let him accommodate himself to the disposition and speech of seculars, but afterwards let him dexterously bring them round to spiritual things, to change of character, to sanctity of life. Thus shall he be as the salt of the world.

Ye are the light of the world. Ye are; again this means, *ye are* by My election and commission what *ye ought to be* in actual truth. *The light of the world,* that ye may by the light of your doctrine and evangelical life illuminate the world obscured by the darkness of errors and sins. So S. Hilary.

S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* 10 *in Epist.* 1 *ad Timoth.*) says, "For this purpose hath He chosen us, that we should be as lights, and act as leaven, that as angels we should be conversant with men on earth, that we should act as men with boys, as spiritual with those who are carnal." The sun is in heaven, but from thence it disperses its rays upon the earth; so do thou be with thy mind in heaven, whilst thy body is on earth, that thou mayest by thy conversation, and the example of thy virtue, illuminate, warm, and kindle it; so shalt thou be a light and a sun to the world.

S. Chrysostom adds something to be pondered deeply: "Assuredly, there would be no heathen, if we Christians took care to be what we ought to be; if we obeyed God's precepts, if we bore injuries without retaliation, if when cursed we blessed, if we rendered good for evil. For no man is so savage a wild beast, that he would not run forthwith to the worship of the true religion, if he saw all Christians acting as I have said. And that you may learn that it is so, consider how many one Paul drew to the knowledge of God. If we were all like him, how many worlds might we not be able to win?"

A city set on an hill, &c. Christ here compares His Apostles, 1. To salt. 2. To light. 3. To a city conspicuous on a mountain. The Church, that is to say, the prelates of the Church, are often

compared in the Psalms to the same thing, as Ps. xlvi. and xlviii. and lxxxvii; also Is. lx., lxv., and Ezek. xl. As, therefore, a city upon a mountain cannot be hid, but strikes the eyes of all beholders, so do apostles, prelates, and priests come before the eyes of all men, that if they discharge their office rightly, and preach the gospel more by their lives than by their words, they will attract many to Christ, and have praise of all: but if they do otherwise, they will turn many away from the Saviour and be blamed by all.

Neither do men light a candle, &c. A candle is not wont to be hid under a bushel, *i.e.*, *under a vessel*, as the Syriac, the Hebrew, and S. Luke have it, *of measurement*, but it is placed on high on a candlestick. So be ye, O ye Apostles! who are placed on a higher step of office and dignity, that ye may enlighten all by your preaching and sanctity.

Allegorically. SS. Hilary, Ambrose, and Bede say, that it is here meant that the light of the Gospel was not to be shut up within the narrow confines of Judæa, but to be placed upon the height of Rome, that it might illuminate all the subject nations.

Candle, Gr. λύχνον, *i.e.*, lamp, torch, candle, anything which gives light; for torches and candles are properly placed upon stands, and in Italy, lamps upon lamp-stands. So also the Hebrew לפיד *lappid*, which we translate, lamp or lantern, signifies anything which gives a light of flame. Hence lamps and torches, as here and elsewhere in Scripture, signify holy, and especially Apostolic men, who illuminate others by the light of their doctrine and holiness, and who inflame them by the fire of their charity. Whence Christ says of John the Baptist, "He was a burning and shining lamp." (Vulg.) So Enoch and Elias are called two olive-trees, and two candelabra. (Apoc. xi. 4.)

Let your light, &c. *That they may see*, &c. The particle *that* denotes that the Apostles of Christ and all their followers must be careful to shine both in word and example, *not for themselves* but for God, in order that they may draw men to God; and by considering this we may reconcile what is here said with Christ's

teaching in chap. vi. 1, 2, and 5. "Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, *that ye may be seen of them.*" The emphasis is upon these last words, that the Apostles should not do righteous works with any such end in view as being glorified and praised by men; but here Christ commends the doing of good works before men, so this only end be kept in view, that they may glorify God by them. Hear S. Gregory (3 p. *Pastor. Admonit.* 36): "Why then is it commanded that our work shall be so done as not to be seen, and yet that it shall be seen, but that what we do must be hidden, so that we ourselves be not praised, and yet must be made manifest that we may increase the glory of our Heavenly Father? For when the Lord forbids our doing our righteousness before men, He immediately adds, *lest we should be seen of them;* and when, on the other hand, he tells us that our good works should be seen of men, he forthwith subjoins, *that they may glorify your Father which is in heaven.* Whether, therefore, works should be seen, or not seen, He showed must be according to the end we have in view."

Think not that I am come to destroy (Gr. καταλῦσαι, *to dissolve, abolish*) *the law and the prophets.* Christ's special meaning in this place is that He came to fulfil the moral precepts of the Law by teaching and expounding them more perfectly, and by substituting the sanction of eternal for temporal rewards and punishments, and by adding to things of precept evangelical counsels of perfection, as will be plain from what follows. It is also meant that Christ supplied the imperfection of the Law of Moses by justifying us through faith and the sacraments of the New Law, which He instituted, which the Law of Moses could not do.

Verily I say, &c. *Verily,* Gr. *Amen—i.e.,* "in truth;" whence Aquila translates the Hebrew *amen* by πεπιστομενως—*i.e., faithfully, truly, certainly.* As S. Jerome says (*Epist. ad Sophron.*), "Amen is the word not of one who swears, but of one who affirms something he is about to say, or confirms something which he has said. In the former case it is prefixed, in the latter it is affixed, as it were a seal." This may be seen from Deut. xxvii. 26, &c., and

1 Cor. xiv. 16. Wherefore the LXX translate the word by γενοιτο, *may it be done*. In this place Amen has the meaning of affirming and gravely asserting.

Moreover, Christ Himself is called *Amen*, Apoc. iii. 14: "Thus saith the Amen, the Faithful Witness."

Until heaven pass away. Not by nature and the perishing of nature, but by the mutation of its condition—that is, until heaven be changed from this state of corruption to a new and glorious state at the Resurrection. In other words, before the end of the world, when heaven and earth shall pass away, *i.e.*, shall be renewed, it is necessary that all things which are written of Me in the Law be fulfilled. Or, rather, *until heaven pass away* means until it wholly perish. The sentence is a hypothetical one, and means, sooner may heaven be destroyed, sooner the earth be riven in twain, sooner the universe come to an end, than the minutest point of the Law not be fulfilled, either in this life or in the life to come. So long, therefore, as heaven and earth shall stand, so long the whole Law shall stand. Heaven and earth shall endure for ever, much more shall the whole Law endure eternally, according to these words of Christ, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Whence the Greek is in the past tense, ἕως ἂν παρέλθη, meaning, the whole frame of the universe shall perish sooner than the Law of God.

Hear S. Irenæus: "Now, of the name Ἰησοῦς, *Jesus*, the letters *iota* and *eta*, *i* and *e*, make up the number 18. These, say the Valentinians, are the eighteen Æons; and this is why the Saviour said, *one jot or one tittle*, &c."

A similar phrase is used in a similar sense (Ps. lxxii. 7): "In his days justice shall arise, and abundance of peace until the moon be taken away;" also Ps. lxxxix. 37, meaning, "The sun and moon shall endure for ever, much more shall the throne of Christ remain eternally."

One jot. Christ, speaking to Hebrews, said, *one yod*, as the Syriac has. For the Greek translator substituted the equivalent, *iota*. *Yod* in Hebrew, like *iota* in Greek and *i* in Latin, is the

smallest letter in the alphabet. From the letter *yod*, although the least, Valentinus, as S. Irenæus testifies, constructed the greatest heresy—viz., that of his Æons, in truth portents of names, rather than names of real existences.

Or one tittle (Vulg. *apex*) *of the law.* He calls the *apices of the law*, not the Hebrew points and accents, which were not invented by the Rabbin until long after the time of Christ, but the tops or little extremities of the letters in which the Law was written.

Till all be fulfilled. All things, that is, which have been spoken concerning Me and My acts, My Church and Sacraments in the Law and the Prophets. Again, *all things* mean all which have been commanded, or promised, or threatened.

Whosoever therefore shall break, &c. Of these least *commandments* —viz., which the Law just spoken of commands, or in respect of which I am about to explain and perfect the Law. This is why He subjoins, *I say unto you that unless your righteousness*, &c. It does not mean, then, that all the commandments of the Law are very small; but that he should be condemned who should break one of even its smallest precepts, or, like the Pharisees, pervert them by a false interpretation, as by teaching, for example, that only outward adultery, not inward concupiscence, was forbidden by the Law. We must observe in this place that commandment is to be taken strictly for a weighty precept binding under the penalty of mortal sin, like the Ten Commandments. For he who shall break one such commandment, although the least in the Decalogue, shall surely be condemned. For it is entirely probable that certain trifling things in the Old Law, although they were commanded by God Himself, bind only under venial sin and temporal punishment. Such, I mean, as taking a bird together with her young ones in the nest, seething a kid in its mother's milk, &c. Not such as these are here called *least commandments*, but those which are least amongst the great commandments, such as to look upon a woman to lust after her, which the Pharisees considered a very small thing, and scarcely a sin at all.

Shall be called the least. Shall be accounted the least; shall be

looked upon as vile; shall be had in contempt by God and the holy angels, as the last of men, and altogether unworthy to be admitted into the kingdom of heaven, but to be damned and cast into hell. Wherefore S. Chrysostom and Theophylact interpret *least* to mean *not at all*, because in heaven there are none who are not great, as S. Augustine says, "all kings of heaven, sons of God."

In the kingdom of heaven. Strictly so called, say S. Chrysostom and Theophylact. But S. Augustine and others interpret the kingdom of heaven here to mean the Church.

But whosoever shall do and teach, &c. *Great*, viz., a doctor, father, and prince of the disciples whom he has taught. And all the commandments of the Law are reckoned as having been done, when whatsoever has not been done is pardoned by God, says S. Augustine. For a fault is corrected and compensated for by penitence. As S. Bernard says (*Tr. de dispensat. et præcept.*), "A part of rule is regular correction." When, therefore, the guilty one undergoes this, he fulfils the rule.

Moraliter. Learn from hence the right way and method of teaching, that a doctor should first do what he is about to teach. Christ, says S. Luke, began to *do* and to teach. He was first Himself poor, humble, meek, a mourner, and then He taught, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Let a doctor therefore examine his conscience before God before he teach, whether he be poor in spirit, meek, and so on; let him see whether he cleave to the world or to Christ, for that he may be Christ's he ought to break his pledge of friendship with the world, and be able to say with S. Paul, "If I yet pleased men I should not be the servant of Christ."

For I say unto you that except your righteousness shall exceed, &c., *i.e.*, be more abundant, excellent, full, and perfect. *Your righteousness, i.e., your observance of the Law.* For it fulfils that which the Law declares to be just or righteous. It also makes us really just before God. As the Apostle says, "Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." (Rom. ii. 13.)

Ye have heard that it was said, i.e., commanded. Ye have heard, i.e., from the Scribes, teaching and expounding the Law of Moses. Christ here begins to show in detail that He was not dissolving the Law, but fulfilling it, and that Christian righteousness ought to excel Judaic and Pharisaic righteousness. Christ therefore here proposes and prefers Himself and His own doctrine both to the Scribes and Pharisees, who by their δευτερώσεις, or traditions, perversely interpreted the Law, as is plain from verses 20 and 43, and to the Law of Moses itself. For Christ added to the Law precepts of explicit belief concerning God the Three in One, and concerning Christ's Incarnation, Passion, and Redemption. He moreover supplied the defects and imperfections of the Old Law, for the Law of Moses was given to the comparatively uninstructed Jews, and this Law Christ perfected by His Evangelical Law.

Thou shalt not kill. Many thought that by this law *murder only* was forbidden, but Christ here teaches that by it even all angry words, blows, reproaches, are forbidden, for such things are, as it were, preludes leading by a direct road to homicide.

But I say unto you, &c. Christ here explains and fulfils the commandment, *Thou shalt not kill*, and teaches that even inward anger is forbidden by it. *I say unto you.* I decree, assert, and sanction, I who am Legislator of all law, Evangelical, Mosaic, and natural.

Whosoever is angry. The Greek adds εἰκῇ, *rashly, without cause.* But the Roman Codices, S. Jerome, and S. Augustine (lib. 1, *Retract.*, c. 19) omit it. But those or similar words must be understood. For unlawful anger is what is here treated of; since anger for a just cause, as for example against sin and sinners, is both lawful and praiseworthy. Anger has been for this very purpose implanted in man's nature, that it should make them brave against vice, and against those things which are really their enemies.

Observe, anger is the thirst for vengeance, and is itself a mortal sin if it deliberately contrive, or wish for, any serious evil of body, or goods, or reputation of one's neighbour, or rejoice in such evils, even though he deserve them, for he who is angry rejoices in

them not as fruits of justice but of revenge. But anger is a venial sin if it desire some trifling calamity to one's neighbour, even though the anger be violent, and flame out both internally and externally. Lastly, anger is no sin at all if it be assumed from zeal for righteousness, for the extirpation of sin and sinners. Such was the anger of Mattathias when he slew the legate of Antiochus, who was forcing the Jews to sacrifice to idols. (1 Mac. ii. 25.) Such was the anger of Christ when He drove the buyers and sellers out of the Temple.

Hear S. Chrysostom on the words in Ps. iv., *Be ye angry and sin not:* "We may be angry lawfully, for Paul was angry with Elymas, and Peter with Sapphira. But I should not call this anger without qualification. I should call it philosophy, carefulness. The father is angry with his child, but it is because he cares for him. It is he who avenges himself who is rashly angry, but he who corrects the faults of others is of all men the meekest. For even God is angry, not to revenge Himself, but to correct us. Let us therefore imitate Him. Thus to act is divine, otherwise it is human anger." Hear also S. Gregory (on Job v. 2, *Anger slayeth the foolish man*): "There is an anger which springs from zeal for righteousness. This is the anger which, because Eli had it not, he roused against himself the vengeance of the wrath of God. For the sword of the eternal Ruler flames against him who is lukewarm in correcting the vices of those who are placed under him."

Shall be in danger of the judgment. Judgment here is to be taken in a somewhat different sense from that in which it occurs just above, *Whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment.* For there the human tribunal by which men were condemned to death for murder is meant; but here is understood the Divine Judgment, which judges and condemns venial anger to temporal punishment, such as purgatory, but deadly anger to eternal punishment, *i.e.*, to hell.

How vile a thing anger is! See S. Basil and S. Chrysostom (*Hom. on Anger*); Cicero (4 *Tuscul.*), where, among other things,

he says, "Is there anything more like to madness than anger—anger which Ennius well calls the beginning of madness? The colour, voice, glare of the eye, impotence of words and deeds, what have they to do with sanity? What is more shameful than Homer's Achilles—than Agamemnon quarrelling? Anger brought Ajax to madness and death."

But whoso shall say to his brother, &c. *Raca.* 1. S. Chrysostom thinks *raca* here signifies *thou*, as if any one should say contemptuously to his neighbour, *Go thou about thy business, what wouldest thou?*—to address any one as *thou* out of disrespect.

2. Theophylact says *raca* means one worthy of being spat upon, for רוק *rok* means *spittle;* but this would be a worse form of reproach than to call any one a fool, which Christ here places as the worst reproach.

3. Some think *raca* here is the Greek ῥακος, *ragged.*

4. And more probably, S. Augustine, Rupert, Anselm, and others think *raca* is an interjection of despising and opposing, and that by it are denoted all the tokens of an evil-disposed mind, whether murmuring, shouting, or spitting, or wrinkling the brow, and so on.

5. And last, S. Jerome, Angelus Caninius, and others think that *raca* is a Hebrew word, derived from ריק *ric, i.e.*, "empty," though not in brain, as S. Jerome says, for that would be a fool; but *empty* in purse; so that *raca* would mean *a man of straw, a pauper.* So the Vulgate translates Judg. xi. 3.

Lastly, George Michaelis, the Maronite (in *Proœmio Grammaticæ Syriacæ, c. de præstantia Syr. Linguæ*) says *raca* is Syriac, and has three meanings—1. A tortoise, which animal is considered so deformed by the Syrians that they nauseate and abhor it; so too, the Italians, when they would speak of a man slow and deformed, say, *pare tartaruga*, like a tortoise. 2. *Raca*, from *rac*, "he has spit." For the Syrians, when they would burn any one up with ignominy, call him *raco, i.e.*, "spat upon;" or *raca* is the same as *rauco, i.e.*, "spittle;" for a Syrian, to show that he made no account of a person, would say, "Thou art but as spittle to

me." 3. *Raca* with the Syrians means *one despised, vile, abject, dirty;* and this is the sense in which I think the word *raca* is here used by Christ. Thus far Georgius.

It is certain that *raca* is more than to be angry, less than to say, *Thou fool!* Again, *raca* is ambiguous. It may be venial, or it may be mortal; but to say, *Thou fool*, is certainly a mortal sin.

In danger of the council. Gr. συνεδριῳ, from which word the Jews called their highest tribunal the "Sanhedrim." As though Christ had said, "He shall be obnoxious to the judgment of the highest court, the Sanhedrim."

Observe, the Talmudic Doctors, and from them Franc. Lucas, Maldonatus, and others, say that the Hebrews had three courts: The first *din mammona*, which was a court for the trial of money causes; it was a court presided over by three judges. The second court was *din mishpat*, or *the Court of Judgment*, *i.e.*, for capital offences. By this tribunal cases of murder were examined and decided. This court consisted of twenty-three judges. The third was the *Sanhedrim*, which consisted of seventy-two judges, by which grave causes and crimes were tried, such as heresy, false prophets, idolatry, apostacy, &c. Christ, omitting the first, alludes here to the two latter tribunals, and calls the second the judgment, the third συνεδριον, the Sanhedrim, the council. The meaning is, that the proportion between anger and a reproachful word, and between the punishment of both, was the same as between the judgment of *Mishpat* and the *Sanhedrim*, or the highest tribunal—that as the latter excelled the former, so the penalty of an opprobrious word exceeded the penalty of anger. For in this comparison, as is usual, it is not necessary to make everything apply. There is, then, a catachresis in the words *judgment* and *council*. For by *judgment* is signified the lesser fault of anger, and consequently the lesser condemnation and penalty; and by *council* the greater fault and the severer punishment.

The meaning then is, as a murderer under the Old Law was in danger of the *judgment*—namely, that his cause should be tried by the criminal judges, and he himself condemned to death; so in

like manner anger, which is the first step to murder, is a criminal cause, and consequently pertains not to the lowest tribunal of *Mammona*, but of *Judgment*, not human but Divine; so that if it should be intense and voluntary, that is, with a deliberate intention of inflicting death or grave evil upon his neighbour, he should for this be condemned to death, not temporal but eternal.

But if anger should break forth into a rough word, such as *raca*, a man would sin grievously—grievously I say, because he would manifest anger by an outward sign, which would pertain to the tribunal of the Sanhedrim, to be heavily punished, according to the degree of the fault. But if he should say, *Thou fool*, it would not be a case for the *Judgment*, but would render him liable to the damnation of hell.

From this explanation it appears, in opposition to the Stoics and Jovinian, that there are degrees of faults and punishments, that some sins are worse than others, and so deserve a severer punishment from God. Whence there is sin which is venial, and there is sin which is mortal. Consequently, in opposition to Calvin, there is clearly a distinction between hell and purgatory.

But whosoever shall say, Thou fool, &c. Under this word *fool*, we are to understand all kinds of revilings, calumnies, reproaches, curses, which are mortal sins, if they be uttered grievously to dishonour our neighbour, or if the desire to do him injury and revile him, spring from the heart. For the gravity or triviality of a contumelious word must be weighed by the intention of the speaker. If you say it in joke, or not really to dishonour, but to correct, it is not formal, but material contumely, says D. Thom. (2. 2. *q.* 72, *art.* 2). Hence parents may severely correct and reprove and rebuke their children, and masters their servants, if it be done with moderation, and for just correction. Thus Christ calls Peter Satan (Matt. xvi. 23), and Paul calls the Galatians "foolish" (Gal. iii. 1). Again, the gravity of the contumely must be measured by the dignity of the person spoken to. For to say to a grave and honourable man, "Thou fool," is a grave con-

tumely; but to call a man a fool who really is one, is a comparatively light reproach.

Of hell fire. The Arabic has, *the fire of hell.* S. Jerome observes that Christ here first uses the word *Gehenna* for hell. It is nowhere in the Old Testament used in that sense. Gehenna is derived from *ge,* a *valley,* and *Hinnom* or *Ennon,* a Jew so called. Gehenna is the valley of Hinnom. It was a pleasant vale near Jerusalem, in which parents were accustomed to burn their children in sacrifice to Moloch; and they beat drums that their cries and wails might not be heard. Hence the same place was called *Tophet, i.e.,* "a drum." Wherefore, Christ here speaks of the *Gehenna of fire,* to show that nothing but fire, and that eternal fire, is meant. See Isaiah xxx. 33, where Gehenna and its torments are graphically depicted: *For Tophet is ordained of old,* &c.

Ver. 23.—*Therefore, if thou bring thy gift,* &c. If thy brother have anything to complain of in thee, any wrong for which to expostulate with thee, as that thou hast called him *raca,* or *fool.* This is the force of *therefore* in this passage. It would appear that the Scribes taught that all sins, and especially violations of the Sixth Commandment, were expiated by sacrifices and offerings at the altar of God, even when no satisfaction was made for a wrong done to one's neighbour. But Christ teaches the contrary, and sanctions the law of justice and charity, by which He bids that satisfaction must first be made to our neighbour who has been injured by us either in word or deed. Wherefore he subjoins,

Leave there thy gift, &c. This is a precept, both of law and of natural religion, which has been by Christ in this place most strictly sanctioned, both because by the Incarnation of Himself He has, in the very closest manner, united us all to Himself and to one another. This greater union, which we have therefore through Christ, demands greater love and unity among Christian brethren: so He has said, "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another." Furthermore, the sacrifice of the Eucharist is more holy than the ancient sacrifices. It is the gathering together and the communion of the Body, of which we

all partake; and therefore we are all mutually united to Christ and one another. Hence it is called communion, that is, the common union of all. Since therefore the Eucharist is a sacrifice, as well as a Sacrament and profession of mutual love and peace, it is necessary that all discord should be done away, and that those who have offended should reconcile themselves to those whom they have offended before this holy Synaxis, lest they be found liars. For in truth he is a liar who takes the Sacrament of union, that is, the Eucharist, and is not in union with, but bears a grudge or rancour against, his neighbour.

This is why it used to be the custom at Mass, that before Holy Communion, Christians were wont to give one another a holy kiss, as a symbol of reconciliation and union, in place of which what is called the *Pax* is now bestowed.

S. John the Almoner, Patriarch of Alexandria, to fulfil literally this precept or counsel of Christ, was once standing at the altar to say Mass, when he remembered that a certain cleric had conceived a hatred for him, and although he was the offended party, yet he asked his pardon first, and being thus reconciled, he went with him joyfully to the altar and finished the sacrifice, saying with confidence to God, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," as Leontius records in his Life. He adds that the same John repelled Damianus, a deacon, from Communion, and said to him, "Go first and be reconciled to thy brother." Damianus promised so to do, when the Patriarch gave him the Sacred Mysteries.

Agree, Gr. εὐνοῶν, *i.e.*, *be of good will*, Syriac, *a friend: with thine adversary*, Gr. τῷ ἀντιδίκῳ σου, *i.e.*, *thine accuser, thy prosecutor*, Syriac, *Beel dinoch*, "the master, or lord of thy lawsuit," Arabic, *with him who is at law with thee: the uttermost farthing*, *i.e.*, of thy debt.

You will ask, who is this *adversary?* 1. Tertullian (*lib. de Animâ*), answers, it is the devil. He is Satan, *i.e.*, our adversary.

2. S. Athanasius, or whoever be the author of *Quæst. S. Script. ad Antioch.* (*quæst.* 26), thinks the adversary means the flesh: for it is an adversary to the soul. "For the flesh lusteth against the

spirit, and the spirit against the flesh" (Gal. v. 17). But we must not agree either with the devil, or the flesh, which is what we are here told to do by Christ.

3. The same Athanasius says with better reason, elsewhere, that it is our conscience, for this is our adversary, and stings us when we do ill, until we agree with it, by following its dictates.

4. SS. Augustine, Anselm, and Bede are of opinion that God, or the law of God is meant, for these fight against our lusts. Wherefore clearly we ought to consent unto them, lest we incur the punishments with which they threaten us. But these are mystical, or symbolical interpretations.

Wherefore I say with SS. Jerome, Hilary, and Ambrose, that by our *adversary* is here meant any one who has been unjustly offended, or injured by us, and is therefore in a position to be able to accuse us before God. With such a one Christ in the preceding verse bade us be reconciled.

Note that there is here a Hebraism, and a parabolical form of expression, in which it is not necessary to adapt every word, but the general scope and meaning is what must be chiefly considered. And these, in this case, are rather hinted at than expressed. The sense then is this:—As a debtor, or one who is accused by a prosecutor before a judge, acts prudently if he agree with his adversary before judgment, and so escape the condemnation of the judge, prison, or infamy, so in like manner do thou act; and if thou hast injured thy brother in any way, as for instance by calling him *raca*, or *a fool*, thou hast made thyself a debtor, as it were, to restore him to honour: come in then, and be reconciled with him speedily, before thou be delivered as guilty to God the Judge, who by a righteous vengeance shall deliver thee to prison, until thou shalt pay all thy debt. That prison is hell, or purgatory, according to the greater or less heinousness of thy sin. The word *until*, seems to bear a reference to purgatory, as though it signified terminable punishment, which is purgatory, whereas the punishment of hell has no end.

Farthing. Greek, κοδράντην. This is a word which has been

borrowed from the Latin, like many others which are found in the Evangelists, such as *prætorium*, *centurio*, &c.

The *quadrans*, here translated *farthing*, was the fourth part of the Roman *as*, and is put for any very small coin. And the spiritual application is, that every debt, even the very least of the fault of anger, must be paid and atoned for after this life, in the place of justice. Wherefore in this life, where is the place for mercy, agreement, and pardon, let us be reconciled to our adversary—*i.e.*, whomsoever we have injured, either by word or deed. I have read in a history that a certain servant who had departed this life appeared to his master, who asked him of his state and condition. The servant answered, "I am in that place where every debt is exactly and rigidly reckoned, and where not so much as a straw is overlooked." Doctor Jacobus also relates that a certain religious man, who had departed this life, appeared in vile raiment and with a sad countenance, and said to a companion, "No one believes, no one believes, no one believes how strictly God judges, and how severely He punishes."

Ver. 27 and 28.—*Ye have heard*, &c. . . . *to lust after her*—that is, with the design and object of indulging sinful passion with her—*hath already committed adultery with her in his heart.* Because by adultery he hath already corrupted her in his mind, and therefore before God, who beholds the heart, he is an adulterer, and as an adulterer he will be punished by Him.

Christ passes from anger to concupiscence, because these two passions have the greatest influence over men. And as He explained the commandment, *Thou shalt not kill*, to forbid anger, so He here explains *Thou shalt not commit adultery* to forbid concupiscence. For many of the Scribes and Pharisees greatly erred in their exposition of this precept, as well as of the former. For although they knew that it was commanded by the tenth precept of the Decalogue, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife*, nevertheless they erred—1. Because they understood it of concupiscence, not altogether internal, but such as is wont to break out in touch, kisses, lascivious words, and such like, according to the maxim,

"The law prohibits the hand, not the mind." But this is true of civil and state law, which only punishes external wrongdoing, but not of the law of God, which weighs and chastises the inmost thoughts of the heart. Josephus, the Jewish historian, fell into this very mistake, when, in the twelfth book of his *Antiquities*, he cites Polybius as saying that Antiochus Epiphanes perished miserably because he had wished to spoil the temple of Diana. Josephus finds fault with Polybius, saying, "To have wished merely, and not to have effected the sacrilege, does not seem a thing worthy of punishment." And R. David Kimchi, cited by Gerebrard (Ps. lxvi.), says, "Even if I should see iniquity in my heart, which I was even prepared to carry out in act, that it should be in the presence of God, and if I should utter it with my lips, yet will not God hear it—*i.e.*, it will not be imputed to me for wickedness. For God does not reckon an evil thought as a work, unless it be against the faith of God and religion." Thus, too, there are many in this day who say, "To think evil is not a sin, but to do evil."

But this is a crass error, known and confuted by Aristotle and other heathens. For free will is the proper test and criterion of goodness and wickedness, of virtue and vice. For if free will seeks what is good and honest, it is itself good and laudable; but if evil, it is evil and blameworthy. Wherefore the external act, as, for instance, of adultery, is not, speaking precisely, a sin in itself (as is plain from the case of idiots being adulterers), unless it proceed from free will. For from free will it derives all its *formal* sinfulness.

2. The Scribes erred in thinking that immodest looks, touch, kisses, &c., were not sins of adultery and fornication, but of concupiscence, and so were done against the Tenth Commandment, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife*, but not against the Seventh. In opposition to this Christ here teaches the contrary, and so expounds the Seventh Commandment that all impurity is forbidden by it, because all such things are the road to adultery, and so a kind of beginning of adultery.

3. They were in error who thought that by this commandment

only concupiscence in respect to another man's wife, but not of any unmarried woman, was forbidden. This error Christ here corrects, and teaches that all impurity between the sexes is forbidden by this law.

Vers. 29 and 30.—*But if thy right eye,* &c. It is plain that there are here two parables, taken from the two most excellent and most useful of our bodily members—the right eye and the right hand. And Christ signifies that everything which entices us to sin must be cast away, however dear, precious, and necessary it may be to us. He makes mention of the eye first, because he had just before said, *Whoso looketh upon a woman,* &c. 1. Thus, S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* 17), by *the right eye* and *hand,* understands a woman beloved, such a one as he had just been speaking of, that she must be cast off, if by her look, voice, or gesture she provoke to lust. 2. S. Augustine (*lib. de Serm. Dom. in Mont.*, lib. 1), understands any friend and minister, even one who is necessary. 3. S. Hilary, Theophylact (*in loc.*), Cyril, Pacian (*Epist.* 3), understand parents and relations, that intercourse with them must be cut off, if it leads us into sin. 4. S. Jerome understands affections and ices of the mind. 5. Auctor *Imperfecti* considers that by the right eye and hand the mind and will are meant, which must be called away from carnal pleasures.

But more simply and plainly you may take *the right eye* and *hand* to be actually meant, but in such a sense as to subserve the meaning of the parable, and to be parabolically explained. For there is here a continuous parable, in which Christ has regard to concupiscence of sight. Christ is dealing with such an implied objection as this which follows: "You may urge that if the eye and the sight are adulterous when they look upon a woman to lust after her, what then shall I do with the eyes which God has given me to see with?"

Again, it is a metaphor taken from surgery. As those who are sick and injured take care that a surgeon should amputate or remove the most noble and useful of our members, if their remaining imperil the safetyof the whole body; so, also, I admonish

you, O my faithful people, that ye endure any loss whatsoever, rather than commit a sin, especially a deadly sin; that, indeed, whatever is a stumbling-block to you and draws you to sin, although it be as dear and necessary to you as your right eye, you should altogether pluck it out and cast it from you, at whatever cost to you of pain and inconvenience; for example, that ye should put away the sight of an eye, even if modest in other respects, that is, the friendship and society of female relations, a wife, a son, a parent, if they bring upon you peril of sin, *i.e.*, if by other means you are not able to escape sin, for it is better to enter into heaven having one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell. But because it is always possible to escape from sin in some other way than by cutting off a member, it is not lawful to cut it off and so mutilate oneself. Thus it was that Origen, who made himself a eunuch for the sake of chastity, was condemned by the Church. Finally, the concupiscences which have to be cut off and mortified by every one so tenaciously cleave to the eyes and the body, yea, to the soul itself, that they cannot be rooted out without great force and sense of pain, so that they who cut them off suffer as much as if they plucked out an eye or a tooth. They who have gone through it know what it is. Whence it is called mortification, because it produces the feeling and pain of death.

Thus according to the letter, SS. Aquilinus and Andomarus, as is related in their Lives in Surius, who had been blind, and recovered their sight by a miracle, asked of God that they might be again deprived of sight, that they might be free from the distractions and temptations to which sight gives rise. Furthermore it was by a special leading of God that the virgin mentioned in the *Spiritual Meadow* of Sophronius, plucked out her eyes and sent them to her lover, who persecuted her with his attentions, because he was ravished with the beauty of her eyes. When he received this gift the lover was smitten with compunction, and exchanged his secular for a monastic life.

S. Antonius asked Didymus, a blind man, whom S. Jerome calls his seer, that is, his teacher, if he grieved over his blindness. He

was silent or a little while, and nodded; then he said, "A prudent man ought not to grieve because he is without eyes, which are possessed by flies and bees; but he ought to rejoice, because he has greater opportunities for opening the eyes of his mind, by which he may see God and divine things."

Ver. 31.—*It has been said*, &c. See what I have written upon the giving *a bill of divorce* in Deut. xxiv. 1.

Ver. 32.—*But I say unto you*, &c. Christ here corrects and settles the law of divorce. 1. Because the law easily conceded divorce for various causes. But Christ permits it only on account of fornication, if a wife be an adulteress; and from an adulterer the innocent wife is at liberty to depart, according to that maxim, "If a man break his marriage vow that may be broken with him." 2. The Law conceded both to the woman who was put away, and to the husband who repudiated her, the liberty of contracting a second marriage. But Christ denies it to both. 3. The Law conceded to the husband alone the power of giving a writing of divorcement. But Christ, with respect to this matrimonial right places the man and the woman upon a perfect equality, as S. Paul teaches, 1 Cor. vii. 4.

Except for the cause of fornication. By fornication here some understand any sin whatever, that is, in the form of a sort of spiritual fornication with any creature, leaving God, the Creator and Husband of the Soul. Thus S. Augustine, Origen, *in loc.* But this is taking it in too loose a sense.

By fornication others understand infidelity. For this is constantly called fornication by the prophets, that is to say, spiritual and mystical fornication.

But expositors, ancient and modern, *passim*, understand fornication here in its strict, literal sense, as denoting all illicit sexual intercourse.

You will say it is lawful to put away a wife if she endeavour to draw her husband into any sin, as is laid down in the chapter, *Quæsivi de divortiis*, and as Christ Himself sufficiently indicates, ver. 29. Also if the wife practise sorcery, or compass her

husband's death; so that it is lawful to put a wife away for other causes besides fornication.

I answer, what you say is true, but Christ here assigns fornication as the only cause of divorce, both because it is the only proper cause of divorce, speaking in a strict sense, from marriage, as being immediately destructive of it, whilst the others are general causes, and would absolve a Christian from any union whatever; also because the divorce of even a repentant adulteress is conceded in perpetuity, so that although the wife repent of her adultery the husband is not bound to receive her again to his house, whereas in the other cases he is bound to receive her back again to favour; lastly, because Christ here wishes entirely to exclude all such causes of divorce as the wife's deformity, poverty, disagreeableness, &c., which were common among the Jews. And to them He is here addressing Himself.

And whoso shall marry her that is put away committeth adultery. Cajetan and others here repeat the words, *excepting for the cause of fornication,* as though it were lawful for the man putting away the adulterous wife, and for the adulteress herself, to enter again into matrimony. But what S. Paul says (1 Cor. vii. 11), is plainly repugnant to this idea. For he there bids the innocent wife remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her adulterous husband. See what I have there said; and this is the constant usage and interpretation of the Church, of which more on chap. xix. 9.

Ver. 33.—*Again, ye have heard,* &c. *Thou shalt perform, i.e., Thou shalt pay,* shalt fulfil what thou hast sworn unto the Lord, or by the Lord that thou wilt do. So S. Chrysostom properly explains that by oaths are here meant vows confirmed by an oath, that we are bound to render them, that is, perform them unto God. Suarez explains differently. "If thou desirest to swear, swear by the true God, not by idols."

Ver. 34.—*But I say unto you,* &c. Christ here explains and perfects the third precept of the Decalogue, which the Scribes and Pharisees had explained falsely. For 1. they asserted that an

oath became an oath, and was binding, if it were made by God, and called Him to witness, but not so if it were sworn by creatures. Christ here teaches the contrary. For in creatures the Creator is understood, for they were made by God, and all that they have and are is from God. For he who swears, calls God, who is the prime Verity, to witness his oath. He therefore who swears by a creature, either makes that creature a God, which is the sin of idolatry, or else it behoves to understand God the Creator in the oath.

2. The Scribes erred, who thought that by this precept perjury only was forbidden. On the contrary Christ here teaches that by it every oath is forbidden, all irreverence and abuse of the name of God.

But I say unto you, &c. From this passage, the Pelagians, as S. Augustine testifies (*Epist.* 89, *q.* 5.) taught that no oath was lawful for Christians. The Waldenses thought the same, as we see from the Council of Constance, and the Anabaptists of the present day hold the same opinion, who will not swear in a trial at the bidding of the judge.

But this is an error of faith, which the perpetual practice of the Church, as well as the example of God Himself, of S. Paul, and the Saints condemns, as is plain from Ps. cx. 4; Rom. i. 9; Philip. i. 8; 1 Cor. xv. 31, &c. Reason itself shows us the same thing; for an oath is an honour to God as the prime Verity, because he who swears appeals to Infallible Truth as his witness. Wherefore an oath is an act of religion, and the highest worship, so that it be done in truth and justice, as Jeremiah says, iv. 2.

You will ask, Why, then, does Christ say, *Swear not at all?* 1. S. Bernard answers (*Serm.* 65 *in Cant.*) that this is not of precept, but only of counsel.

2. Others allow that this is a precept, but one which only forbids perjury.

3. Others think that the command, *Swear not at all*, applies only to swearing by creatures, not by God. To this opinion S. Jerome inclines.

But all these explanations are forced and incorrect, and are refuted by what follows; for Christ bids us *swear not at all*, (1) because, as S. Augustine says (*de Verb. Apostoli*), "False swearing is destructive, true swearing is perilous, swearing not at all is safe." *Not at all—i.e.*, "As far as lieth in thee, that thou shouldst not affect nor love swearing, nor take any pleasure in an oath, as though it were a good thing." Again, to swear is, *per se*, a moral evil of irreverence with respect to God; just as it is a moral evil, *per se*, to kill any one; yet there are cases in which it is a duty. So it is with an oath. In Paradise it was not lawful to swear, nor will it be lawful in heaven. So great is the majesty of the Name of God that It must not be called to witness unless necessity compel. For to invoke It about small and worthless things is to make It small and vile, just as would be the action of one who should call the king as witness about a single guinea. Hence the saints were cautious about swearing. In the Life of S. Chrysostom it is recorded as a notable thing that he never swore. The same is testified of S. John the Almoner.

You will ask whether also for Christians it is lawful to swear? For (1) many of the Fathers seem to say that it is not. SS. Jerome, Chrysostom, Euthymius, say that swearing *was permitted by God* to the Jews, lest they should swear by idols, but is not permitted to Christians. (2) Theophylact and Euthymius are of opinion that an oath was a legal precept of the old law, like circumcision. Wherefore, as the latter has been done away by Christ, so has the former. (3) Others think that an oath was allowed by God to the Jews, as being uninstructed, imperfect, and hard of belief, but has been forbidden to Christians because more perfect things become them as being more perfect, and because they ought to beware of the slightest peril of perjury. That in the same way divorce was permitted to the Jews, lest they should kill the wives whom they hated; and yet Christ takes away this permission from Christians. Thus think S. Hilary (*in loc.*, *Can.* 4), S. Ambrose (*in Ps.* 119, *Serm.* 1), S. Basil (*in Ps.* 13), Chromatius and Origen (*in loc.*, *Tract.* 35), Epiphanius (*Hæres.* 19), S.

Athanasius (*Serm. de Passione et Cruce Domini*), S. Chrysostom (*Hom. ad pop.*).

If you object that in Holy Scripture God took an oath, as in Gen. xxii. 16, SS. Athanasius, Basil, and Ambrose answer that such oaths of God were not strictly speaking oaths, but asseverations only—or promises; or, as S. Ambrose says, God may swear because He is able to fulfil that which He swears, and He cannot repent of it. But a man ought not to swear because he has not any certain power of doing that to which he pledges his oath.

If, further, you object that surely S. Paul swore when he said (2 Cor. i. 23), "I call God to witness upon my soul" (Vulg.), S. Basil answers that this is not really an oath, but only a simple mode of speech, uttered with the appearance and form of an oath as a stronger affirmation.

But I say that not to the Jews only, but to Christians, is it lawful to swear. This is of faith, as is plain from the perpetual sense, use, and practice of the Church. "For of all strife among men" —even Christians—"an oath for confirmation is the end," says the Apostle to the Hebrews (vi. 16). Moreover, in Scripture there is no affirmative precept for swearing, as there is for praying, sacrificing, loving and praising God, honouring parents, &c., because an oath is not, *per se*, desirable, but only for the sake of something else, and, as it were, *per accidens*, in such sort that it is a kind of medicine for unbelief. And there is a negative precept for swearing, namely that you shall not commit perjury or swear by false gods, but only by the true God. There is also a conditional precept that if you swear you shall only swear what is just, true, and necessary.

You may say, Christ here solemnly says to Christians, *Swear not at all*. I answer, this is true because, *per se*, it is unbecoming and improper to call the Great and Good God to witness about human disputes on account of men's mutual distrusts, unless this impropriety may be excused by mutual necessity, as it is often excused by the want of witnesses and other judicial proofs.

To the Fathers who have been cited, I reply that they seem to have spoken in the same sense that Christ did, because they saw men often swearing falsely or unjustly, and, still more frequently, lightly, foolishly and rashly; hence on account of the peril of these things, they forbade an oath to Christians, that they should refrain from it as much as possible. But if any one is careful to avoid such dangers, then it is lawful for him to swear in a case of necessity. This is plain from S. Chrysostom, who, in his homilies to the people of Antioch, frequently and sharply rebuked their habit of rash swearing. And to those who wondered at his so doing, he thus replies: "I say and repeat, as I am accustomed, because ye say and repeat what ye are accustomed." And he declares that he will not cease from this repetition until they leave off swearing. "For a hard knot a hard and constant wedge must be used."

Neither by heaven, &c. It seems that the Jews were wont to swear by heaven and earth, and similar oaths. And because the Pharisees thought that these oaths, being made by creatures, were of small account, Christ here teaches the contrary—viz., that he who swears by heaven or earth, swears by God their Creator, who has placed the throne of His glory in heaven, and his footstool on earth.

Ver. 37.—*But let your communication be*, &c.—*i.e.*, a simple affirmation, or negation. *For what is more than these*, Gr. περισσὸν. The Syriac has, *what is added beyond these.* In the Hebrew Gospel ascribed to S. Matthew, we have אין אין *ain, ain*, כן כן *ken, ken*—that is *no, no, so, so.* In this passage a simple affirmation or negation is opposed to an oath; so in S. James (v. 12); and it means that whatever is added to these in the way of swearing, is of evil. So S. Chrysostom and S. Jerome, or rather Paulinus, *Epist. ad Celantium.*

Of evil. Evil here may be taken either in the masculine or the neuter gender. If the masculine the devil is meant, who, as a ringleader of all iniquity, incites thee to swear without necessity, and so draws thee on by degrees to swear falsely, which is the sin

of perjury. So Theophylact, Maldonatus, and others. If you take the neuter, it means *cometh of vice, either your own or another's*—that is to say, the custom of swearing arises either from your own vice of levity or irreverence, or else from another man's incredulity and distrust. Because a man does not believe my simple assertion, I confirm my words by an oath, which, however, is a fault become necessary since the fall of man. So S. Augustine.

Vers. 38 and 39.—*You have heard*, &c. This was the law of retaliation. *But I say unto you, Resist not evil.* That is, an evil or unjust thing, or an injury done to thee by a wicked man. That is, do not requite evil by evil, injury by injury. Or better, *resist not evil*, taking *evil* in the masculine—*i.e.*, the evil man who injures you. The Greek is τῷ πονηρῷ, though both meanings amount to much the same thing.

Note—1. That the ancient *lex talionis* was just, but in practice it was often unjust, and sprang from a desire of revenge, by which one who had had an eye or tooth plucked out brought before the magistrate the person who had injured him, and demanded, by way of retaliation, that his eye or tooth should be plucked out. But Christ supplies the deficiency of this law and perfects it, by opposing to the *lex talionis* the law and counsel of patience, and to a disposition thirsting for revenge the law of meekness.

Note—2. That this law of Christ has not regard to magistrates, as Anabaptists say, that all war not only offensive, but even defensive, is forbidden to Christians by Christ, but has regard to private persons; for it is the office of the magistrate to scourge the guilty and to put murderers to death.

Note—3. This law of Christ does not take away from private individuals the *lex talionis*, which is of the law of nations and of nature, both for the reparation of offended justice and for the correction of the guilty person who has offended; much less does it take away the right of defending ourselves when we are attacked by an enemy, but only forbids the desire of vengeance.

Note—4. That Christ here wishes to imprint upon us a disposition to meekness and patience, that however much thou mayest

be injured, yet still that thou shouldst not depart so much as a hair's breadth from inward peace and charity; and that if love of your neighbour and the glory of God, in any conjuncture of circumstances, should absolutely require that you resist not evil, but patiently accept it, that you should in such a case do as the first Christians did—suffer joyfully the spoiling of your goods, or even the deprivation of life itself. I say then, with regard to these three cases spoken of by Christ, *If any one smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also; If any one will take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also; Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain,* that they are, speaking generally, matters of counsel, not of direct precept; but if the salvation of our neighbour and the glory of God require them to be done, then they are of precept. For instance, if the Indians or the Japanese knew that Christ has commanded Christians to turn the other cheek to him who smote them upon one cheek, and unless they did so those heathens would be scandalized and turned away from embracing the faith of Christ, then I say that it would be the bounden duty of any Christian, but especially of a preacher, to turn the other cheek to him who smote him upon one. There is a literal example of this in the life of S. Francis Xavier, the Apostle of India and Japan. When the Japanese were laughing at him as a foreigner, and at his new doctrine concerning Christ crucified, it happened that a certain Japanese, hearing John Fernandez, a companion of Xavier, preaching in the street, out of petulance spat in his face. Fernandez, in no way disturbed, quietly wiped away the spittle, and proceeded with his discourse. The Japanese were so filled with admiration at his patience and struck with the wisdom of the new preachers, that they gave themselves to them as disciples, and in great numbers embraced the faith of Christ.

Lastly, it is a distinguishing characteristic of a martyr not to resist, not to defend himself, but to suffer himself to be slain for Christ. For, "a soldier fights, not a martyr." A martyr is a sharer in the Passion of Christ, as the martyrs write to S. Cyprian,

(lib. 5, *Epist.* 12.) For the passion of Christ is the pattern of all martyrdom.

Wherefore that Theban Legion of very many and very brave soldiers, being condemned to death by the Emperor Maximian, because they would not sacrifice to idols, when soldiers were sent amongst them to slay them, would not defend themselves, even though they might have sold their lives dear and made an immense slaughter of their enemies. But at the instigation and exhortation of S. Mauritius, they piled their arms and suffered themselves to be immolated like a flock of lambs, for the sake of Christ. It was Christ who taught this new philosophy, a paradox to the world, unknown to the philosophers, unheard of among men, but heavenly and divine, and confirmed the same by His own example, when He willingly gave Himself up to the Jews to be bound, scourged, and crucified. Whence He says Himself, "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair." (Is. l. 6.)

Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, &c. This is, as I have said, a matter sometimes of precept, sometimes of counsel. Compliance with it flows from a generous mind, prompt to suffer, and earnestly desirous of imitating the Life and Passion of Christ. Hence S. Ambrose by *the right cheek* mystically understands *patience*, which conquers all things. "For as," saith he, "Samson by the jaw-bone of an ass slew a thousand Philistines, so Christ by His patience overthrew the demons and all His enemies."

Thus that glorious Spiridion, Bishop of Trimituns, in Cyprus, being invited by the Emperor Constantine to visit him on account of the fame of his sanctity, when he was entering the imperial palace in a mean and foreign garb, was derided by one of the servants and slapped on the cheek. On receiving it he immediately turned the other cheek, on which the servant was so struck with his virtue, that he became ashamed, and falling down on the ground at his feet begged him to forgive him. (See Spiridion's Life in Surius, *Decemb.* 12.)

Similarly, a monk who was slapped on one cheek by an

energumen, offered her the other; and by this drove out the devil. Hear the account (*Auctor. Doctrinæ Pat. Tract. de humilitate n.* 5): "When the monk entered into the house, there came the girl who was vexed by the devil, and gave the monk a slap in the face, but he, according to the Divine precept, offered her his other cheek to slap. The devil, being constrained, began to cry out, 'O! The power of the precepts of Jesus Christ drives me hence.' And immediately the girl was cleansed. When the monk came to some old men, he told them what had been done, and they glorified God, saying, 'It is the habit of diabolical pride to fall before the lowliness of the commands of Jesus.'"

Cassian celebrates the patience of a certain religious man, who in order to try his virtue, received a very sharp slap on his cheek from his Abbot Paul in a large assemblage, and so severe was the blow that it was heard by a number of persons who were sitting a considerable distance off. Yet not only did not the monk murmur, but his face was not even suffused with a blush, as is usual.

Lastly, S. Eulogius, presbyter and martyr of Cordova, being sentenced to death by a Saracen prince because he had spoken evil of Mahomet, whilst he was being led to martyrdom, was struck by a Saracen on his cheek. He offered him the other, when he received another slap upon that. Soon afterwards he was beheaded, when a dove came and sat upon his body, a sign and a vindication of his dove-like meekness, innocence, and patience. This happened A.D. 859, on the 11th day of March.

And if any man will sue thee at the law, &c. The cloak is an outer garment, and often of considerable value; the coat in this passage is an inner garment, whence the saying, "Your coat is nearer than your cloak." Wherefore the coat cannot be plucked away until the cloak has been taken off. So S. Luke rightly inverts the order of the two, and says, *And him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take away thy coat also.* But the meaning is the same in both. If any one shall take one garment away from thee, do not go to law with him to recover it, but rather let him take

possession of another, if he will. S. Francis did this literally. On account of his profuse almsdeeds he was taken by his father before the Bishop of Assisi, that he might be made to give up his property. Not only did he yield up his other goods, but he resigned even his clothes to his father, saying, "Now shall I say more boldly, 'Our Father, which art in heaven.'" S. Elizabeth, daughter of the King of Hungary, afforded in this matter a rare example of patience and poverty. After the death of her husband, the Landgrave of Hesse, she was expelled with the utmost indignity by his vassals and relations from her home, she was despoiled of all she had, and reduced to the most extreme poverty. With joy and alacrity she went to a Franciscan convent; and there she asked the brethren to sing *Te Deum laudamus* in thanksgiving to God. Afterwards she wandered from house to house, like a beggar, with her children, and at last entered a hut, where she was tormented with the smoke, heat, wind, and rain, yet always did she give God thanks. The insults, reproaches, and scoffs of her relations she joyfully endured, being glad that she was counted worthy to suffer such things for God. At length, her father, King Andrew, begged her to go back to Hungary to share in the royal splendour. She would not, but in great poverty, gaining her own living by spinning wool, she spent the rest of her life, performing the most menial offices for poor, ulcerated, and leprous people. And so, a little before her death, she heard the singing of the angels, and the sweet voice of Christ calling her to His heavenly kingdom — "Come, My chosen one, and enjoy the bed in heaven which I have destined for thee from all eternity." (See her Life in Surius, *Nov.* 19.)

And whoso shall compel thee to go a mile, Gr. ἀγγαριζεῖν. *Angiare* is a Persian word. The Persian royal messengers and postmen were called *angari*. They had the right of seizing horses, men or ships, and enforcing their service, so that *angiare* has the same meaning as to *impound, compel*. Hence the words *Angarice* and *Parangarice* in law books. In Hebrew *iggheret* means a *letter*, that which is carried by *angari* or *runners*.

The meaning is—If any one shall force thee to go one mile with him, go to the second mile-post rather than contend; so will you keep peace, exercise patience, and conquer by your charity him who compels you, and make him your friend.

And let not believers think that this is too difficult for them to do. S. Basil (in his *Homily on reading heathen books*) shows that philosophers taught and did as much. For instance, Pericles, who, upon a certain occasion, had suffered abuse from a person during a whole day, took him home in the evening with a light. Of Julius Cæsar, Cicero says that he forgot nothing except injuries. But those things were but shadows of Christian virtues, which existed in a far greater and more solid degree in S. Paul, S. Laurence, S. Vincent, who gave thanks to their tormentors for weaving for them their martyrs' crowns. S. Cyprian ordered twenty pieces of gold to be given to the executioner who was to behead him. Brother Juniper, the companion of S. Francis, received taunts as Christ's jewels. Once to him who reproached him, he cried, "Cast your jewels into my lap; would that I might be stoned with precious stones like these all the way to Rome!" In the *Lives of the Fathers* we read of a certain religious man, who the more any one vexed him, or laughed at him, the more he rejoiced, saying, "These are the men who afford us an opportunity of becoming perfect; but they who commend us disturb our minds, for it is written, 'They who speak well of you are those who deceive you.'"

Climacus (*Gradu 4 de Obedientiâ*) says that a certain religious, named Abbakirus, suffered divers trials and tribulations at the hands of his brethren for fifteen years. He was even driven from table by the servants. But he bore all patiently, and took none of the indignities offered to him seriously, but as proving him. And when he lay a-dying he said, "I give thanks to Jesus Christ the Lord, and to you, that ye have tried me unto salvation, for, lo! for these seventeen years I have remained untempted of the devil." The same Climacus relates that an old man, named Macedonius, who by his own desire had been sent among the novices, said, "Never

have I felt freedom from all strife and the sweetness of divine light within my soul as I do now."

Give to him that asketh, &c. At first sight the precept might not seem to be in harmony with what has gone before concerning the *lex talionis*, but it is indeed in perfect harmony. The meaning is this—I, Christ, instead of the law of retaliation, appoint a law of love and kindness. Wherefore, whosoever asketh anything of thee, be he friend or be he enemy who has injured thee, or smitten thee on the cheek, or taken away thy cloak, give him what he asks; and if he should desire to borrow from thee, turn not thy face away from him, as people are wont to do, but treat him kindly as a neighbour, and lend him that he requires, as though he had never injured thee.

In fine, the sermon and sanction of Christ here does not decrease but increases, for although it may be easier *per se* to give to every one that asketh thee, than when thou art smitten upon one cheek to offer the other to the smiter, yet it is more difficult *in the connection*, which implies both the patience which suffers such things and such men, and the beneficence by which we give or lend to those who ask us. For it is more difficult to do a kindness to one who has injured us, than simply to bear an injury patiently. So S. Augustine, *lib. de Serm. Dom.*, c. 40.

The liberality of S. John, Patriarch of Alexandria, is well known. Encouraged by these words of Christ, he gave large alms to all who asked him, whence he derived his name of the Almoner. And the more he gave the more he received, so that it seemed as though there were a strife between God and him who should be the more liberal. For John overcame God, but much more did God overcome John. John would not examine those who asked him, whether they were rich or poor, worthy or unworthy, few or many. "I am persuaded," he said, "that if the whole world should come to Alexandria, needing alms, they would be very far from exhausting the treasury of God."

S. Francis, upon one occasion, shortly after his conversion, refused, contrary to his custom, to give an alms to a poor man.

But he very soon afterwards repented of his refusal, and gave the man a large alms; and he made a vow that in future he would never refuse to give when he was asked. By this his liberality, he drew down upon him that abundant grace of God by which he attained to such eminent sanctity.

That is a rare thing which we read in the Chronicles of the Franciscans concerning Alexander Aleusis, who was called a fountain of life, and who was the teacher of S. Bonaventura. His affection for the Mother of God was so great that he would never deny anything to any one who asked him in her name. A certain Franciscan got to know of this, and, seeing that he was by far the the most celebrated Doctor of the University of Paris, came to him and said, "By S. Mary, I beg of you to become one of us." He believed the man was sent by God, and immediately followed him, and became a Franciscan Brother.

Ver. 41.—*Ye have heard*, &c. It has been asked, where is it said, "Thou shalt hate thine enemy?" Maldonatus replies, in Deut. xxv. 19, "Thou shalt blot out his name from under heaven." God had commanded Joshua and the Hebrews utterly to destroy the impious Canaanites, and to seize their land. But the Law bade only the Canaanites to be slain, not other nations, and even them, not out of hatred: just as a judge might order a guilty person to be put to death, not because he hated him, but even one whom he loved.

I maintain, therefore, that this saying was not in the Law, but was said by the Scribes who interpreted the Law. For they, because they found in Lev. xix. 18, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour," or "thy friend," as the Vulgate translates, inferred from thence that they should hate their enemies. Wherefore Christ here corrects this interpretation of theirs, and explains the Law, that by neighbour or friend every man is meant, even a foreigner, a Gentile, and an enemy. For all men are neighbours, through their first forefather, Adam, and brethren one of another. We are also brethren through our second Father, Christ, through whom we have been born again, and, as it were, created anew in the

likeness of God, and called to the common inheritance of God, our Father in heaven. So S. Jerome, Augustine, Theophylact, and others.

But I say unto you, &c. Christ here bids us love our enemies in heart, in word, and in deed. In heart, when He says, "Love your enemies;" in word, "Bless them that curse you;" in deed, by adding, "Do good to them that hate you."

That ye may be the children of your Father, &c. Christ bids that in loving our enemies we should imitate God, who does good to his impious enemies, giving them rain and sunshine, corn and fruits. For the mind of God is so lofty, that He regards no injury or blasphemy of any one, however impious, as done against Himself. He perceives no diminution of His honour and glory. He is so impassible and so holy that no anger or revenge can affect Him, and so good and clement that He showers His gifts upon His enemies, preventing them with His grace, and alluring and drawing them to reconciliation. Yea, He gave up His only Son to be crucified, that He might reconcile them and save them. Let us imitate these things as far as we can.

For if ye love them, &c. The publicans were so called because they farmed and collected the public taxes. And they extorted from the poor with the utmost rigour more than they had a right to pay. For this reason they were accounted by the Jews iniquitous and infamous.

What reward have ye? None: for if ye love your friends only, not your enemies, ye only do as the publicans do, and God will give you no reward in heaven. For such love is of nature, not of grace and charity, which latter love extends itself even to enemies. And ye do receive a reward from your friends, namely, reciprocal love. But if ye love your enemies as well as your friends, ye will deserve and obtain great grace and glory from God, since both kinds of love are the fruit of charity. Charity therefore bids us love both friends and enemies, corrupt nature our friends only.

Publius Sulla was wont to boast that he surpassed his friends

in benefits, his enemies in injuries. Other heathen did the same. There were indeed a few among them who did love even their enemies. Such was Phocion, who being condemed to death, and at point of execution, being asked what message he would send to his son, made answer, "I wish him to forget this injury which the Athenians have done to me."

Lycurgus, King of the Lacedæmonians, being deprived of an eye by a certain young man, the youth was presented to him by the people that he should punish him in any way he pleased. Lycurgus took the youth, and gave him excellent instruction; and when he had quite reformed his character, he brought him into the theatre, and presented him to the people, saying, "Lo! him whom I received from you violent and injurious I restore to you profitable and acceptable." See Plutarch in Life of Lycurgus. If the Gentiles, led by nature and reason, did such things as these, for the sake of temporal glory, what ought not Christians to do, led by faith and grace for the reward of a blissful eternity?

And if ye salute your brethren only, &c. *Brethren, i.e., relations, kinsfolk, friends. Salute.* Gr. ἀσπάσησθε *salute with a kiss and embrace*, which was the customary method of salutation among the Greeks and Romans, and indeed amongst the first Christians, according to those words of S. Paul, "Salute one another with an holy kiss." (2 Cor. xiii. 12.)

Be ye therefore perfect, &c. The emphasis here is upon the word *ye*. Because ye are separated from the heathen, and chosen of God, that ye should be His faithful ones, His friends, His sons and heirs, therefore imitate the holiness and perfection of your Heavenly Father.

The word *therefore* refers partly to what immediately precedes concerning love of our enemies. "Do ye therefore, O faithful, who are the friends of God, and who ought therefore to be better than the heathen, do you love all men, enemies as well as friends, even as your Father wholly extends His love to all." But the *therefore* also partly refers to all that has gone before. For this maxim is the end and completion of all the sayings of this

chapter, as though Christ said, "Thus far I have unfolded the commandments of God, which are the sanction of the perfection of all virtue. Be ye therefore perfect in meekness, in purity of heart, in patience, in chastity, in charity, and in every virtue which the Law of God enjoins."

You will ask whether this perfection be of counsel or of precept? I reply, partly of counsel, partly of precept. First, it is of precept that every believer in Christianity should endeavour to be perfect, in such wise that he should perfectly love his enemies as well as his friends, and keep perfectly all the other commandments of God. For Christ is here speaking to all the faithful, as is plain from what precedes. Hence we learn from this passage that all Christians are under obligation to be advancing towards perfection according to their state and condition. For this is required that they should be the children of their Heavenly Father, as Christ says. Whosoever therefore desires to be the child and heir of this Father ought to imitate Him in perfection; because, as S. Cyprian says (*Serm. de bono Patient.*), "The children of such and so great a Parent ought not to be degenerate."

Moreover, S. James (chap. i.), addressing not religious, but all believers, says: "That ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." For if soldiers in battle wish to be most brave, disciples in a school most learned, workmen, each in their own craft, most exact, servants in obeying their own masters most diligent, why should not Christians, who are called by Christ to holiness and perfection, wish to be most holy and most perfect?

Blessed Theresa was wont to say that God has an especial love for those who are perfect, and makes them, as it were, captains and generals of others, that they should convert, save, and perfect many. Wherefore she herself made a vow that in every work she would do that which should be more perfect, and for the greater glory of God. See S. Chrysostom (lib. 3. *de Vituperat. vitæ Monast.*), where he teaches that the precepts of Christ bind seculars as well as religious, and that therefore both ought to aim at perfection, each in his own state and rank, according to that which God said

to Israel, "Thou shalt be perfect and without spot before the Lord thy God." (Deut. xviii. 13.)

2. This perfection is of counsel so far as it extends itself to the observance, not only of commands, but of evangelical counsels, such as voluntary poverty, chastity, and religious obedience; such, I mean, as when Christ said, "If thou wilt be perfect, sell that thou hast and give to the poor." (Matt. xix. 21.)

Moreover, this perfection mainly consists in charity and love, especially of our enemies. For this is the perfection of *life*, since the perfection of the *country* consists in the vision and fruition of God. Christ here tacitly intimates that the way of attaining perfection and eminent sanctity is for any one to exercise himself in love of his enemies, both because this is the highest and most difficult act of charity, as because it is the greatest victory over ourselves. For he who does this generously vanquishes anger, revenge, and the other passions of the soul; and God requites his charity with far more abundant gifts of grace. So that holy virgin mentioned by D. Tauler, when asked how she had attained to so great sanctity, replied, "I have ever loved with a special love any who have been troublesome to me; and to any one who has injured me, I have always endeavoured to show some special mark of kindness."

As your Father which is in heaven, &c. For He with a perfect love loves all men. Upon all He sheds the beams of His beneficence, as it were a perennial sun of kindness, Who expects not to derive any advantage from any one, but out of pure love desires to communicate His benefits to others, that thus He may contend with the wickedness and ingratitude of man; for few indeed are they who love Him, their Benefactor, in return as they should do. The word *as* signifies likeness, not equality; for we cannot come up to the perfection of God, for that infinitely transcends all our perfection; but we ought to imitate it as far as we are able.

The perfection then which Christ here requires of a Christian is not merely human but Divine perfection, and similar to God's perfection. For he is our Father not only by nature, but by

grace, for by it "we are partakers of the Divine nature," as S. Peter says. Therefore we are made to be really sons of God, and as it were gods upon earth. And so S. Peter proposes the words in Lev. xi. 44 as a kind of mirror for Christians saying, "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy." (1 Pet. i. 16.) And S. Paul says, "Be ye imitators of God as dear children." (Eph. v. 1.) Beautifully says S. Cyprian, "If it be a pleasure and glory to men to have children like themselves, how much more is there gladness with God our Father, when any one is so born spiritually, that the Divine nobility is manifest in his actions?"

1. The perfection of God consists in the most ample love of all men, bad as well as good. And it is to this Christ has special reference in this passage.

2. It consists in the highest forbearance, kindness, and tranquillity, and the impossibility of being affected by injury, wrath, or revenge, so that He is imperturbable and without passions. So in like manner must we, if we would be perfect, be meek and tranquil, and to that end must mortify anger and all other mental passions. Whence S. Ambrose says (*lib. de Jacob et vita beata*), "It is the part of a perfect man to sustain like a brave soldier the onset of the most terrible misfortunes, and like a wise pilot to manage his ship in a storm, and as he runs through the surging billows, to avoid shipwreck rather by facing the waves than by shrinking from them."

Hence we shall find it a singularly efficacious means of attaining perfection for every one to search carefully into the state of his own soul, and find out his chief vice, from which, like branches from a root, all his other faults spring, and to strive against this with all his might until he root it out. For example, the radical and dominating vice in Peter is pride, in Paul gluttony, in James luxury, in John acerbity, in Philip anger, in Andrew sadness, in Matthew pusillanimity. Let every man know his own vice, and when it is known, let him fight against it with suitable weapons and mortify it.

3. God looks down from on high upon all earthly things as

mean and poor, and gloriously presides over heaven and heavenly things. So in like manner, ought the man who is aiming at perfection to despise earthly honours and pleasures as worthless matters, pertaining to flies and gnats and fleas, and ought to look up to and covet the heavenly things, which are God's.

4. The mind and will of God are most just, holy, and perfect. With this mind, then, ought we to be clothed, that we may be like God—yea, one with God. Hear what S. Bernard says about this: "The unity of a man's spirit with God is his having his heart lifted up towards God, and entirely directed to Him; when he only wills what God wills; when there is not only affection, but *perfect* affection for God, so that he cannot will anything save and except what God wills. For to will what God wills is to be already like God. But not to be able to will except what God wills, this is to be what God is, to whom to will and to be are the same thing.

5. God is of a great and lofty mind, which transcends all things, and which ever abides and is established in His own blessed and tranquil eternity, and so converts and draws all things to Himself. Hear, again, S. Bernard (*ad Fratres de Monte Dei*): "Thou shalt, amid the adverse and prosperous changes and chances of the world, hold fast as it were an image of eternity; I mean an inviolable and unshaken constancy of mind, blessing God at all times, and vindicating for thyself, even in the uncertain events of this changeful world, and in its certain troubles, to some extent at least, a condition of abiding unchangeableness, so shalt thou begin to be changed and formed anew into the image and likeness of the eternal God, with whom is no changeableness, neither shadow of turning; for as He is, so also shalt thou be in this world, neither fearful in adversity nor dissolute in prosperity."

Lastly, all perfection in this life is begun only, and is imperfect. For concupiscence, like a Jebusite, dwelleth in our members, and can be kept under, but not entirely extirpated; but in heaven, perfection shall be full and complete, where this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on a blessed im-

mortality, where death and concupiscence shall be swallowed up of glory, and God shall be all in all. There shall be no covetousness, where love shall fill all things. Whence the Apostle says of himself (Philip. iii. 12):—"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

CHAPTER VI.

1 *Christ continueth his sermon in the mount, speaking of alms,* 5 *prayer,* 14 *forgiving our brethren,* 16 *fasting,* 19 *where our treasure is to be laid up,* 24 *of serving God, and mammon:* 25 *exhorteth not to be careful for worldly things:* 33 *but to seek God's kingdom.*

TAKE heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

2 Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly:

5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are:* for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and, when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen *do:* for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name:

10 Thy kingdom come: thy will be done, in earth as *it is* in heaven:

11 Give us this day our daily bread:

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors:

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

16 Moreover, when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great *is* that darkness!

24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.

Take heed, &c. Instead of *alms*, some Greek Codices read δικαιοσύνην, *righteousness*, or *justice*. This is the reading of the

Syriac and the Latin Vulgate. The Complutensian, Royal, and other Greek Codices read *alms*. The Arabic translates *mercy*—of which the Saviour speaks next. For this is in Scripture κατ' ἐξοχην, or *par excellence*, a common word for righteousness, as I have shown on 2 Cor. ix. 10. Hence S. Chrysostom reads *justice*, understanding *alms*. After Christ in the preceding chapter had expounded one by one the precepts of the Law, which prescribe all righteousness, *i.e.*, whatever is just, and right, and holy, or all good works, now, in this chapter He proceeds to teach the way of doing things holily and rightly, that we should do them with a right intention, and with the desire of pleasing God, not man. He begins with alms. Then He teaches how we ought to pray, and next how to fast; for with these three vain glory is wont chiefly to be bound up, says S. Chrysostom.

That ye may be seen. The word *that* denotes the intention and the end. "Do not do holy and just works with this intention and object, to be seen and praised of men, for this is vain ostentation. But Christ does not here forbid them to be done publicly, and advantageously, that men may see them and glorify God. Whence S. Gregory says, "Let thy works be so done openly that thy intention may remain in secret, and that we may afford an example of good works to our neighbours, so that yet with our intentions, by which we seek to please God only, we may always desire secrecy."

Moreover, vain glory eats out all the dignity, worth, and merit of good works, like the worm the gourd (Jonah iv.).

Otherwise ye have no reward, &c. The reward of vain glory is the applause and favour of men. He who seeks to please men displeases God. For God, forasmuch as He is the author of good works, desires to be the object and end of the same, that we should do them for God, and refer them to His glory. Wherefore S. Paul says, "For if I yet pleased men I should not be the servant of Christ."

S. Basil (*in Constit. Monast.* c. 11) calls vain glory the robber of good works. "Let us fly from vain glory," he says, "the

insinuating spoiler of good works, the pleasant enemy of our souls, the moth of virtues, the flattering ruin of our good things, who colours the poison with the honeyed mixture of her deceit, and who holds out to the souls of men her deadly cup. And I think she does this that men may the more greedily drink her down, and never be satiated with her. How sweet a thing is human glory to those who have not had experience of it!"

When thou doest thine alms do not sound a trumpet before thee. Syr. *do not blow a horn.* When the Scribes and Pharisees were about to give away alms in the public streets they either sent a trumpeter before them, or else blew a horn themselves, under the pretext of drawing together by that means crowds of poor persons, who might run and receive alms, but in reality out of ostentation, and that their liberality might be seen and talked of by those who flocked together.

Observe that Holy Scripture, the prophets, but above all Christ, detest hypocrisy and hypocrites, who intend one thing in their heart, and pretend something else outwardly. For Christ is truth, simplicity, sincerity itself; wherefore He hates all falsehood and duplicity.

Moreover, hypocrites are like the monstrous beasts which S. John saw in the Apocalypse (chap. ix.), for they had the faces of women and the tails of scorpions. In the same manner hypocrites smile with their faces, and flatter with their mouths, but at the last they secretly strike and sting. Yet these very hypocrites, whilst they wish to hurt others, hurt themselves far more, "for there is nothing hid which shall not be revealed." Wherefore their hypocrisy and fraud is easily detected, by which means they are confounded and lose their fame and credit, and become hateful unto all men. Wherefore David prays against hypocrites, and at the same time threatens them with most dreadful punishments (Ps. cxx.): "Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips and from a deceitful tongue. What reward shall be given or done unto thee, O thou false tongue? Even mighty and sharp arrows with hot burning coals."

They have their reward—their, i.e., their own, viz., what they sought for. Again, *their own* is what is agreeable and congruous with their vanity, that of which alone they are worthy, that, like chameleons with wind, they may feed upon fleeting popular breath. How foolish are merchants like these, who, when by alms they might buy heavenly and eternal riches, neglecting these, prefer to buy the empty praise of men, that is, vain words, which beat the air, and then pass away!

But thou, when thou doest thine alms, &c. Omitting various explanations which are here collected by Maldonatus, I would say briefly, the meaning is as follows:—Avoid ostentation in thine alms and thy virtue, and as far as thou canst, seek for secresy, that thou mayest not be seen of men, nor thy virtue talked about, that if, *per impossibile,* thy left hand could have eyes, it should not be able to see what good thy right hand doth, what, or how great alms thou dost bestow. It is a parabolical hyperbole common among the Syrians. Thus S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and others. And as S. Jerome says in his Epitaph of Fabiola, "Virtue which is concealed rejoices in God as her judge."

That thine alms, &c. *Openly, i.e.,* says S. Augustine at the Resurrection, "Thou shalt be blessed, because the poor have not wherewith to recompense thee; but there shall be a recompence given thee at the Resurrection of the just, when the Lord, as the Apostle says, 'shall reveal the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart, and then shall every man have praise of God.'" Just and congruous reward of secret work is public praise in the Judgment. For Christ will reward thy secret work publicly in the Judgment before God, angels, and men with eternal glory. Thus when S. Martin had divided his cloak, and given half of it to a poor man, in the night following, Christ appeared to Martin, clad in the same cloak, and praised him in the presence of the angels, saying, "Martin, while yet a catechumen, has clothed Me with this garment."

But if thou make a show of thine alms, or any good work, God will hide it so that no one may behold, admire, or remember

it: but if thou hide it God will manifest it to the whole world, especially in the Day of judgment. Thus S. Gregory gave alms to an angel in form of a shipwrecked sailor. He gave him large alms, again and again, when the angel asked them, but always in secret. But through this he gained the very summit of public glory; for the angel afterwards revealed that it was for this cause Gregory had deserved the chief bishopric of the Church. So Christ, in the form of a ragged beggar, asked of S. Catherine of Sienna first her tunic, then her cape, then her gloves, all of which she freely and secretly gave Him. On the following night He appeared to her, showing her the tunic bespangled with jewels, and promising that he would give her an invisible gown, which would preserve her from all cold (wherefore in future she never felt any cold), and in heaven public and illustrious glory. (So Raymund in her Life.)

Ver. 5.—*And when ye pray*, &c. Foolish and imprudent was this vanity and ostentation of the Scribes by which they affected the public streets, where was a greater crowd of people, that they might stand before them, and exhibit their prayers and devotion, when they ought rather to have sought for a secret place for prayer, in which they might collect their thoughts, and converse with God alone without distraction. What therefore is commonly said of three places unfit for study, that it is useless at a window, in the street, by the hearth, because of the various distractions which occur at those places, may be even more truly said of prayer. Prayer is useless at a window, in the street, by the hearth.

Stand praying. From this and other passages Jansen is of opinion that the Jews stood, not knelt, to pray. But I say that the Priests and Levites sacrificed and sang Psalms to God standing, and the people who were present also stood, because if they had knelt they would have been unable to witness the sacrifices, especially in a great press of people, on account of the screen, three cubits in height, interposed between them and the altar. Again the people stood to hear a sermon, or to receive bene-

diction, as in Solomon's case; also in a solemn thanksgiving for victory, or any similar benefit, as we stand when a *Te Deum* is sung. S. Azarias and his fellows stood and sang the *Benedicite* in the fiery furnace of Babylon.

But at other times the Jews prayed kneeling, especially in acts of adoration or penitence. Especially Solomon at the Dedication of the Temple prayed and worshipped kneeling. For—mark this, ye courtiers and delicate ones, who like the Jews, bend one knee to Christ—he kneeled with both his knees upon the ground. (1 Kings viii. 54). So Daniel kneeled down three times a day and worshipped God. So Micah (vi. 6): "I will bow my knees to the Most High God." For this is the manner of adoration among all nations. Hence the words, "I will leave me seven thousand men in Israel, whose knees have not been bowed to Baal." And God says (Is. xlv. 23), "Every knee shall bow to me." And (2 Chron. xxix. 30), "They bowed their knee and worshipped." This standing then to pray on the part of the Scribes and Pharisees was a part of their pride and vanity. They thought themselves to be worthier and holier than the rest of the people.

As for Christians, from the very beginning they have been accustomed to kneel down to pray. For when Christ was near to die, he prayed, kneeling down; yea, prostrating Himself upon the earth. See also S. Peter (Acts ix. 40), and S. John (Apoc. xix. 10, and xxii. 8); and S. Paul (Acts xx. 36; and Eph. iii. 14, "For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"). Christians, therefore, in memory of the fall of Adam and his posterity, pray kneeling at all times except Sundays and the Paschal season, when they pray standing, in honour and as a figure of the Resurrection of Christ, as S. Justin teaches (*Quæst.* 115), "Whence is this custom in the Church? Because we ought to retain in everlasting remembrance both our fall through sin, and the grace of our Christ by which we have risen again from our fall. So for six days we kneel in token of our fall through sin, and on the Lord's Day we stand in token of our deliverance from sin and death." S. Irenæus teaches that this practice began

in the time of the Apostles. (*Lib. de Paschat.*) Tertullian enjoins the same custom. (*Lib. de Corona Militis.* c. 3.)

But thou . . . enter into thy closet. Gr. ταμεῖον, *i.e.*, any private place such as thy bedchamber; Vatablus renders, *thy cell.*

SS. Augustine, Jerome, and Ambrose understand by *closet* the heart or the mind, and their privacy, as though he who prays should enter there and shut it, so that no distractions may creep in to draw away the soul from God. As S. Jerome says: "*Shut to the door—i.e.*, shut thy lips and pray inwardly in thy mind, as Hannah, the mother of Samuel, did" (1 Sam. i. 13). Hear S. Ambrose: "The Saviour says, *Enter into thy closet*, not that which is enclosed by walls which shuts up thy bodily limbs, but the closet which is within thee, in which thy thoughts are enclosed. This closet for prayer is ever near thee, and ever private, of which there is no witness or judge but God alone." "God who," says S. Cyprian (*Tract. de Orat.*), "is the hearer of the heart, not of the voice." It was a saying of Francis, that "the body is a cell, and the soul a hermit, which tarries in its cell wheresoever it may be, even among men, to pray to the Lord, and meditate upon Him. Cassian gives another reason (*Collat.* 9, c. 34): "We must pray in silence, that the intention of our prayer may not become known to our enemies the demons, lest they should hinder it."

This meaning is true, but mystical rather than literal. But there is no reason why *closet* here should not be understood in its plain ordinary sense, of any private place. Hear S. Cyprian: "The Lord bids us pray secretly in hidden places apart, in our very chambers, because it is more agreeable to faith, in order that we may know God is everywhere present, hears and sees all, and in the plenitude of His majesty penetrates the most hidden and secret places, as it is written: "Am I a God nigh at hand, and not a God afar off." (Jer. xxiii.)

So, then, Christ does not here condemn public prayer in church, which has been the common laudable practice both of Jews and Christians, as is plain from 1 Kings viii. 29, Acts i. 24. Tertullian (in *Apol.* c. 30.) writes: "Looking up thitherwards (to heaven),

we Christians pray, with hands expanded as innocuous, with head uncovered, because we are not ashamed." For the Jews, especially the priests, were wont to pray with their heads covered, as I have said on the Pentateuch. Our missionaries also in China cover their heads when saying mass, in accordance with an Indult of Pope Paul V., because among the Chinese it is a mark of disgrace to uncover the head. "Finally," proceeds Tertullian, "we pray without a prompter, because we pray from the heart." Lastly, the temple is the proper place of prayer, in which one and all may pray to God as secretly as though they were praying in their own bedchambers.

That is indeed a ridiculous heresy which has sprung up lately in Holland, from a wrong understanding of this passage by a certain innovator, who rejects all temples, and holds the conventicles of his sect nowhere but in bedrooms. The Calvinists, too, when they ask a blessing before meat, cover their faces with their hats, that they may pray in secret; but then a hat is not a bedchamber, as is very plain.

Ver. 7.—*But . . . much speaking*. Gr. *Battologia*, *i.e.*, a trifling and futile profusion and repetition of words, as if by this their rhetoric they would give God information concerning His own affairs, and would bend Him to concede what they ask, as orators by their rhetoric endeavour to move judges to acquit an accused person.

Christ therefore here teaches that the essence of prayer does not consist in words profuse and drawn out, but in converse of the soul with God; and that the object, and, as it were, the soul of prayer is the desire and pious affection of the mind, which, however, does not, of course, exclude outward expression in words.

Be ye not therefore like unto them, &c. It means, the heathen think that God is ignorant, or at least does not consider their miseries and wants, from which they pray God to deliver them. They use, therefore, many words, that they themselves may tell Him of them. But they err, for God knows and considers their wants far more than those who pray. Still He wishes to be prayed to, and often He will not succour without being asked, that men may recognize both

their own miseries and God's mercies, and may know that they are not delivered by their own merit, but by the gift and grace of God. S. Augustine adds, "that God in prayer exercises our desire, that by it we may be able to receive what he is preparing to give. For that is something very great indeed, but we are too small and narrow to receive it."

Thus therefore ye shall pray: Our Father, &c. Christ here delivers to Christians a method of prayer, but He does not command that we should use these words and none else, but only teaches the things which should be asked of God, and in what order and with what brevity they may be asked. Well, however, does the Church use these very words of Christ, as being divine, most brief, clear, and efficacious. Whence S. Cyprian (*Trac. de Orat. Domini*) says, "What can be more real prayer to the Father than that which proceeded from the mouth of the Son, who is the Truth?"

Note, the Lord's prayer comprises all the things which should be asked of God, whence Tertullian (*lib. de Orat.* 1) calls it the *Breviary*, that is, the compendium of the Gospel, in the same way that the Ecclesiastical Office recited daily by priests is a compendium of the whole of Scripture, whence it is commonly called the *Breviary*.

S. Augustine (*Epist.* 121, lib. 2, *de Verb. Dom.)*, and Theologians after him, divide this prayer into seven petitions, the three first of which deal with the honour of God, the remaining four with our service. For first, before everything else, we must seek the honour of God. For this is our end, and involves our beatitude, and the means by which we may attain unto it.

Our Father. This, says Tertullian, is the title of goodness and power. By *Father*, S. Cyprian, Chrysostom, and Ruperti, understand the First Person of the Sacred Trinity, for to Him as it were the *principium* of the Trinity, the Church addresses most of the prayers, or collects in the Mass, and desires that they may be heard through the merits of the Son, saying, *Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son*. But other writers more correctly understand the whole Trinity or Godhead, because all the Three

Persons operate equally in all things *ad extra*, and therefore all are equally to be invoked.

By the word *Father*, we are put in mind of all God's immense benefits, and consequently of that utmost fidelity, reverence, and love which we owe to God, and how we ought to strive to please Him as our Father. For what can be dearer to a child than a father? Or whom ought he to strive more to please? S. Cyprian bids us observe "the wonderful condescension of God, who bids us pray in such wise that we should call God our Father, and that as Christ is the Son of God, so we also, for whom eternity is laid up in store, may call ourselves the sons of God. Hence he gathers that "we ought to remember that when we call God our Father, we should act as sons of God, that as we have complacency in God being our Father, so He likewise may have complacency in our being His children. Let us have our conversation as temples of God, that it may be evident that God dwelleth in us. Nor let our actions be degenerate from our spirit, that we who have begun to be celestial and spiritual may think and act only after a heavenly and spiritual manner."

Our. Christ does not here say, *My Father.* For this expression is appropriate to Christ alone, who is the only Son of God by nature, says the *Gloss.* But He says, *Our Father*, because He is speaking in behalf of all, that He may teach that God is the Father of all, and that all we are brethren, and ought therefore to love one another and pray for one another. "So," says S. Cyprian, "He would that one should pray for all, in such manner as He Himself bore all in one." And the *Author Imperfecti* says, "That prayer is more pleasing to God, not which necessity pleads, but which the charity of brotherhood presents." Christ willed that each should pray for all, that all might pray for each, that every one should have the gain not only of his own prayers, but obtain the profit of every one else's prayers. This is spiritual interest and usury indeed.

Which art in heaven. This expression signifies, first, the supreme power and dominion of God, that He is both able and willing to

grant whatever we ask; that as being Father, he is most good, but that He is also most great. 2. It signifies our inheritance, which we hope for by reason of our adoption of God our Father, and that it is heavenly, not earthly. 3. Christ admonishes us that when we pray, we should transfer our thoughts from earth to heaven, where God manifests His glory to angels and saints. So S. Chrysostom. Therefore when we pray we turn to the east, where the sun rises, says S. Augustine, that we may be all instructed to turn to God.

Hallowed be Thy Name. 1. S. Ambrose and S. Chrysostom understand by this hallowing, the sanctification of God in our Baptism, that having received this sanctification it may remain in us. For we have need, says Cyprian, of a daily sanctification, that we who sin daily may be daily sanctified. 2. Tertullian explains it to mean, *make men holy*. But by this meaning the first petition would become identical with the second, *Thy kingdom come*. More correctly therefore SS. Augustine, Chrysostom, and others explain thus:—Grant, O Lord, that not the names of idols, or devils, of Mahomet, of Arius, or Luther, or Calvin, but that *Thy* Name may be hallowed among men.

Moreover, *Name* may be here understood properly, and figuratively for the thing named, and this, 1. For the Deity Itself, as though He said, "Let Thy name, *i.e.*, mayest Thou Thyself, O Lord our God, be hallowed." 2. For the honour and glory of God, for we pray that these may be had in honour by all men. 3. For the attributes of God, as His omnipotence, wisdom, justice, mercy. And the meaning will be—Grant, O Lord, that men may know, worship, and sanctify Thee Thyself, as One in Essence, Three in Person, as well as Thine omnipotence, wisdom, &c. And so may they celebrate and glorify them continually, both with heart and tongue, in life and actions; and not Christians only, but Pagans, Jews, and heretics, by having a true faith in Thee, and a true love towards Thee, in a word, that Thou shouldst convert them to Thyself.

Note, the Holiness of God is the most sacred majesty, per-

fection, Divinity of God, His purity, faithfulness, goodness, and other Divine attributes, which the Seraphim behold, rapt as it were in an ecstacy, and which they so admire and are amazed at, that they sing for ever, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God of Sabaoth; the whole earth is full of His glory." Hence, too, the Blessed Virgin, when she had conceived in her mind and her womb the Holiness of God, the Eternal Word, cried out in glad amazement, "My soul doth magnify the Lord," &c. "For He that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy is His Name."

When we say, *Hallowed be Thy Name*, we also desire our own sanctification. We cannot sanctify God as He is in Himself, nor can we increase His eternal and infinite glory; but when we sanctify God, sanctity is added to, and increases in, ourselves, that is to say, holy faith, holy charity, the holy worship of God. By these things we are sanctified inwardly, and we hallow God outwardly, because by means of our holiness the holiness of God is glorified and made known among men. Lastly, all our own hallowing of God is finite and poor; learn therefore that there is a twofold way of infinitely hallowing God. The first is, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen." That is, I ascribe to God that infinite glory which He has had from all eternity, that glory with which the Father, the Son, and the Spirit perpetually glorify each other with Divine and infinite praises. The other way is, when we offer Christ crucified to God in the Mass. For Christ, because He is God and Man, is a Divine Victim, commensurate with God, and infinite. Iterate then, and constantly use, both these methods, that thou mayest hallow God as He deserves, and as He ought to be sanctified and glorified.

Thy kingdom come. This is the second petition of the Lord's Prayer. The kingdom of God is fourfold. 1. It is the empire of God over all created things. Of this it is said in Ps. cxlv. "Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all ages." 2. God's mystical kingdom: by

it, through faith and grace, He reigns in the hearts of the Faithful. It is such a kingdom as this, that the devil should cease to reign in the world, and that sin should no longer reign in our mortal bodies, that S. Ambrose, S. Jerome, and Euthymius think is here meant. Hear S. Ambrose (lib. 6 *de Sacrament.* c. 5): "The petition is, that the kingdom of Christ may be in us. If God reign in us, the adversary can have no place in us. Fault, or sin reigns not, but virtue reigns, modesty and devotion reign."

3. The kingdom of God is in heaven, in which He happily and gloriously reigns among the Blessed. This is what Tertullian and S. Cyprian here understand. "Well indeed," says the latter, "do we pray for the kingdom of God, that is, the heavenly kingdom, because there is also an earthly kingdom. But he who has renounced the world is already greater than its honours and its kingdoms; and thus he who dedicates himself to God and to Christ desires not earthly but heavenly kingdoms."

4. That is the kingdom of God, most perfect and complete, in which, after the kingdom of the devil, after sin and death have been altogether conquered and destroyed, God alone shall perfectly rule over both His friends—that is, the saints—and His enemies, *i.e*, the impious and the reprobate. And this shall be at the Resurrection and the Day of Judgment, of which 1 Cor. xv. 28. This is the best way of understanding this petition; for, as I said, these three first petitions are concerned directly only with God's honour and glory, and with ours only as a consequence. The meaning, then, is this—We pray, O Lord, that Thou mayest eign wholly, and without any adversary, that all creatures whatsoever may be wholly subject unto Thee. Hence, also, we ask, as a consequence, for ourselves, that we may be speedily translated from this world, as from a wearisome pilgrimage and a perilous warfare, to the kingdom of everlasting glory and happiness, that we may reign with Christ and His saints for ever. For then shall God wholly reign in us, and we in God, according to these words of the Apocalypse, "Thou hast made us to our God a kingdom

and priests, and we shall reign upon the earth." For then shall "God be all in all." (1 Cor. xv. 28.)

Thy will be done, &c. This is the third petition, although Tertullian (*lib. de Orat.*) places it second, and the third, *Thy kingdom come*. This petition, also, has respect to God and God's kingdom, because the more God's will is done, the more God's kingdom is extended. For the great honour of God, the great empire of God, is that all men and all things should be subject to His will, and that it should be fulfilled in all. Now the will of God is twofold. The will of well-pleasing, and the will of signification, or *absolute* and *optative* will. The will of well-pleasing in God is that with which God absolutely wills a thing to be done, which will is always fulfilled, and which nothing can hinder or delay, according to the words of Ps. cxxxv., "Whatsoever the Lord pleased (*voluit*, Vulg.) that did he in heaven and earth." And in Is. xlvi., "All my counsel shall stand, and all my will shall be done." (Vulg.) In this will we must acquiesce, either by rejoicing at it, or by submitting to the adversity which it may bring upon us.

The will of signification is that by which God signifies that He wishes His laws and precepts, which He has imposed upon us, to be done by us. All the Fathers understand this petition to speak of this second will. The words, therefore, do not apply directly to God's will of *efficacy and good pleasure*, for it cannot but be fulfilled, but to that desiring and commanding will of God which theologians call *significative*. The meaning, then, is—"Grant, O Lord, unto us Thine abundant and efficacious grace, that, by means of it, all men may, both in doing Thy behests and in suffering what Thou willest, obey thy will with as much alacrity and concord as the angels obey it in heaven. So S. Jerome, Chrysostom, Theophylact, &c. Christ seems here to allude to the words of Ps. ciii. 20, 21, "Bless the Lord, all ye angels of his, ye that excel in strength, doing his will, and hearing the voice of his words. Bless the Lord, all his virtues, which do his will." (Vulg.) We ought, therefore, to imitate the promptitude, swiftness, and perfection of the angels in fulfilling the will of God, that we

may venerate and honour it, and in so doing we shall do good to ourselves. For, as the Apostle says (1 Thess. iv.), "This is the will of God, even your sanctification."

Note 1.—The optative will of God which is termed *significative*. First, as commanding, by which He commands, or forbids something to be done. This we are always bound to fulfil. The other, persuading and counselling, by which He counsels us to embrace a state of poverty, or virginity, or a state of perfection, &c. This we are not bound to fulfil absolutely; for we may decline on account of some special honest cause, as, for example, infirmity, temptation, the duty of succouring our parents, or the State—something which God has only counselled generally. The reason is, that God neither wills with an absolute will that which He only counsels, nor does He will to bind *me* to this particular thing. Hence I am not bound to fulfil it. But it is otherwise with respect to God's will of *commanding*.

Note 2.—Our will ought to be conformed to the Divine will. First, *effectively*, because that our will may be good, it ought to will that which God wishes it to will—that, namely, which the law of God wishes it to will and do. For our will ought to submit itself to the Divine law and will, as creating and ordering all things.

2. Objectively: Our will ought to consent to the Divine will, as to its formal object, or as to the reason of willing. That ours may be a right will it ought to will that which is good and conformable to right reason, and, therefore, to the Divine will. For the Divine will wills that which right reason declares ought to be done. For the eternal Law which is in the mind and will of God is the norm and the rule of all goodness and all virtue.

3. Our will, in order to be good, is not bound always to conform itself, with respect to the material object or thing willed, even when this is known, to the Divine. This is plain from examples of Holy Scripture. For God willed Sodom to be overthrown; but Abraham, as far as he was concerned, wished it not to be, wherefore he prayed to the Lord that He would not destroy it. God willed that the infant which was born to David of

adultery should die. David was intensely grieved that it should die. God willed that Christ should not come in the flesh until 4,000 years had elapsed. The prophets desired that Christ should come quickly. God willed to forsake the Jewish nation, and to transfer His beneficences to the Gentiles. But Paul was so grieved at this that he wished to be *anathema* from Christ to avert it. In fine, this is so true, that God can command me to will something which He Himself willeth not. Thus He commanded Abraham to will to slay his son, whom, nevertheless, God willed not to be slain. The reason is that what God willeth may be inconvenient and troublesome to man. For, as S. Augustine says, one thing is suitable for man, another thing for God (*Enchirid.* 101). Whence, so far as it is troublesome, a man may will it not, and grieve over it. But this affection will be in accord with the Divine will in general. For piety and charity dictate that it is right that we should desire our own safety and that of our friends, and that we should, as far as we can, procure it. But if we perceive afterwards that it is the absolute will of God that this should not be, we must not fight against it, nor murmur at it, but rather submit humbly to it, and acquiesce in it, and say with Christ in the garden, "Not My will, but Thine be done." For that first will of ours, differing from God's will, as respects the thing willed, is wishing *(velleitas)* rather than absolute will. Wherefore, it always includes this condition, expressed or implied, "if it so please God."

Hence it follows further that we are not bound to will those things which happen by God's permission only; indeed, there are some things which we ought not to will, as sins, for neither does God in any manner will these. And some other things which are not sins we are not bound to will: we may wish them not to happen, and with all our might strive against them, such are slaughters, the destruction of cities. Yet even in such things as these it seems best to say with the Psalmist, "Just art thou, O Lord, and right is thy judgment." (Vulg.) Wherefore it is better, for the most part, to consider that these things are permitted by the just

judgment of God for His glory, and to acquiesce in the Divine dispensation, rather than to vex ourselves by grieving too much over them.

We can, therefore, be unwilling that such things should happen, so far as evils spring from them, and yet will them so far as God wills them to be for the just punishment of sins. For this is God's absolute will, which is called of God's good pleasure, to which we ought to consent by rejoicing in good things, and by suffering without murmuring in evil things, as when God chastises us with famine, or pestilence, or war. As Maldonatus says, "We ask that the will of God may be done *in* us, as well as *by* us; for it is of greater importance that the very least part of the will of God should be done than every good of a creature, *quâ* creature, should befall. And S. Cyprian *(Tract. de Mortalitate)*, when he was exhorting his people to bear patiently the pestilence which was at that time devastating the province, says, "We should remember that we ought to do not our own will but God's, according to what the Lord has bid us daily pray."

That is a notable thing which we read in the Life of S. Christina *(apud Surium, Jun.* 23). On the same day on which Jerusalem and the Cross and Sepulchre of Christ were captured by Saladin and the Saracens, she, who was then in Belgium, knew what had happened by revelation from God, and yet she rejoiced in spirit. When asked why she rejoiced, she answered thus: "Christ hath decreed, that for the indignity done to Him that land should be subject to this ignominy, although it was sanctified by His Passion; yet it shall return with Him in the end of the world, when, for the sake of recovering that soul which is to live for ever, and which was redeemed with His blood, men shall be turned from iniquity to a zeal for righteousness, and shall shed their own blood, and shall, as it were, recompense the death of the Saviour with great devotion."

To this we may add that infidels relatively live better and offend God less than professing Christians who know God better, and have received greater benefits from Him. Wherefore the

Holy Land was given up by God to Saladin and the Saracens on account of the multitude of the enormities which the Christians committed who inhabited it, such as not even the Turks are wont to commit. These enormities are graphically described by Marinus Sanutus, in his work entitled *The Secret Cross of Christians*.

Lastly, R. Gamaliel (*in Pirke Avoth*, c. 2) well says, "Make God's will altogether thine own will; yea, leave thine own to fulfil His. For thus will God make the will of others concordant with thine." This is the congruous reward of obedience, that like as we obey the Divine will, so will others obey and consent to our will.

As in heaven, so in earth. "He bids us who have our conversation here below have fellowship with the inhabitants of heaven; and He would that before we come to that habitation above, we should make earth another heaven."

The hieroglyphic of prayer is a golden chain let down from heaven with the motto, *Thus are we drawn to the stars*. Homer feigned that a golden chain was let down from heaven by Jupiter, that the rest of the gods who were living upon earth might attach themselves to it and drag him out of heaven. They, endeavouring to do this with all their might, were by it, beyond their expectation, drawn up as by a ladder into heaven. This is the symbol of prayer, for prayer is the ascension of the mind to God; and D. Dionysius affirms it to be the golden chain by which we draw God Himself to us, and draw ourselves to Him, when we submit our will to His most just and infallible will. And this is the great result of our prayers; and this Christ Himself has expressed for us in these words of the Lord's Prayer, *Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*.

Mystically, S. Cyprian by *heaven* understands the righteous, and by *earth*, sinners: Grant, O Lord, that sinners may do Thy will as the righteous do it.

Second.—S. Augustine by *heaven* understands Christ, who descended from heaven to earth, that He might espouse earth, *i.e.*, the Church on earth to Himself by the Incarnation; as though He

had said, Grant, O Lord, that like as Christ doeth Thy will in all things, so also the Church may do it; for she is the Spouse of Christ, whom it behoveth to be in all things conformed to her Bridegroom.

Moraliter. The sanctity, rest, joy, and perfection of a Christian consist in denial of his own will and conformity with the will of God. As S. Bernard says (*Serm.* 28 *in Cant.*), "This conformity marries the soul to the Word."

S. Gertrude was wont to repeat these words, *Thy will be done*, three hundred and sixty-five times a day with the greatest devotion, and she perceived that this was a sacrifice most pleasing to God. Once, when she was told by God to make a choice of either health or sickness, she replied, "I most fervently desire that Thou wouldst not do my will but Thine." And by this means she abode in the deepest peace and joy. For he who knows that he possesses all things in God, and counts all other things as nothing, and considers God's will as the best, and rests wholly in it, is able to say with the Psalmist, "I will lay me down in peace and take my rest;" and with S. Augustine (lib. 1 *Confess.*, c. 1), "Thou, O Lord, has made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it resteth in Thee." There is extant a short but famous dialogue of S. Catherine of Sienna upon this subject, in which she teaches that the utmost peace and perfection consist in conformity to the Divine Will; that a man should plainly and wholly resign to that Will not only his own will but all that he is or has, and should say everywhere and always in every event whatsoever, *Thy will be done.* S. Catherine had fashioned an abode in her heart, with chambers tabulated according to the Divine Will; and in it she was wont to dwell most happily and holily. In it she shut herself up, so that she thought nothing, said and did nothing, save what she believed would be pleasing to the Will of God. And therefore the Holy Spirit was wont to teach her whatever ought to be done; for she had heard from God, "Believe, My daughter, that thy God is better able to know and will what is for thy good than thou art; and therefore to order and direct all

things, prosperous and adverse, for thy good, far more surely than any father and mother care for, and procure benefits for, an only child"

Give us this day our supersubstantial (many MSS. read *daily*) *bread.* This is the fourth petition, in which we begin to ask for the things which concern ourselves. S. Chrysostom connects this petition with the one preceding—thus: "I, Christ, bid you ask that the will of God may be done by you, as it is done by the angels. I do not, however, equal you to the angels, for ye have need of bread; but they require it not, for they are immortal and impassible, ye are mortal and fragile." Hence Ruperti (lib. 17, *in Gen.* 25) concludes that all men, even princes and kings, are beggars from God. For as God fed the children of Israel for forty years in the wilderness, by raining down manna upon them from heaven, so every day, when we sit at table, God as it were rains food upon each of us from above. Hence David says, "I am a beggar and poor. The Lord careth for me." (Ps. xl. 17, Vulg.) "Let us all," says Ruperti, "say as mendicants before the doors of Divine grace, *Give us this day our daily bread.*" Hear S. Augustine: "A beggar asks of thee, and thou art God's beggar. For we all, when we pray, are God's beggars; we stand at the door of the great Father of the family, yea we prostrate ourselves, we groan as suppliants, wishing to receive something, and that very something is God Himself. What doth a beggar ask of thee? Bread. And what dost thou ask of God but Christ, who saith, 'I am the living Bread which came down from heaven?'"

Supersubstantial. You ask what is *supersubstantial bread?* I reply the Greek is ἐπιούσιον, which is found only here and in S. Luke xi. 3. 1. Angelus Caninius (*lib. de Nom. Heb. N. Test.*) translates *to-morrow's bread*, for ἐπιουσια ἡμερα is often put for *the following day*. He would paraphrase the petition thus, "As on the day of preparation, or Friday, the Hebrews in the wilderness collected manna for the Sabbath, on which day they were to rest, so do Thou, O Lord, give us this day bread for to-morrow, for we are not solicitous for anything beyond, but after to-morrow we await,

and as it were prepare ourselves for the Lord's Resurrection, and the eternal Jubilee. Therefore, we collect our baggage, and only ask for bread for to-morrow. It is in favour of this that S. Jerome writes that the Hebrew Gospel of the Nazarenes reads מחר *machar*, *i.e.* "for to-morrow." Whence S. Athanasius (*Tract. de Incarn. Verb.*) thinks that we here ask for the Holy Spirit, who is the Divine Bread, whom we hope to feed upon and enjoy in Heaven, and whose first-fruits we receive and taste in the Eucharist.

2. S. Jerome explains ἐπιούσιον by περιούσιον, that is *principal, glorious, excellent*. Symmachus translates *elect*, or that which is above all substances, and is superior to all creatures. So also Cassian (*Collat.* 9. 20), Cyril (*Cat. Mystag.* 5), and S. Ambrose (lib. 5, *de Sacrament.* c. 4), who by this *bread* understands the Eucharist, which in Zech. ix. is called "the corn of the elect." (Vulg.)

3. Literally, ἐπιούσιος, means *that which pertains to substance*, say *substantial, essential*, that which is for the preservation of man's life and substance, as often as is necessary. So S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and S. Basil, as well as many others, who with Suidas interpret ἐπιούσιον, as ἐπὶ τὴν ἡμῶν οὐσίαν καὶ τροφὴν ἐπαρκοῦται, or that which is congruous to, and suffices for, our substance and nutrition, that which subserves, not pleasure but necessity, that which is not too delicate or abundant but frugal and moderate, *i.e. daily*. Hence the Syriac has *the bread of our need;* Arabic, *bread sufficient*. So, also the Egyptian, Ethiopic, and Persian versions. So also the Fathers who lived before S. Jerome's version, such as SS. Cyprian, Ambrose, Augustine, translate *daily bread*. And the Church in the Breviary and Missal uses the same ancient translation, and teaches the faithful to pray, *Give us this day our daily bread*.

S. Jerome, who, at the bidding of Pope Damasus, corrected the Latin version of the New Testament, in accordance with the Greek, in this place substituted *supersubstantial* for *daily*, to bring the passage into accord with the Greek.

This *supersubstantial*, or *daily bread*, is a parallel expression to

the Hebrew דבר יום *davar yom*, "the thing, or matter of a day." For Christ forbids us to be anxious about the morrow, in which it is uncertain whether or not we shall be alive. "He would," says S. Chrysostom, "that we should be always girded, and provided, as it were, with wings of faith, by which we may fly heavenward, and give no greater indulgence to nature than necessary use demands." Again, S. Jerome's reason for translating ἐπιούσιον literally, by *supersubstantial*, was to indicate that in this petition we ask above all for heavenly bread, such as we receive in the Eucharist.

2. You ask what is this special *supersubstantial*, or daily *bread*. Calvin (lib. 3, *Instit.* c. 20, 44), and Philip Melancthon, in his *Commonplaces, tit. de Invocat.*, understand it of corporeal food only. Some Catholics understand it to mean only spiritual food. Certainly SS. Jerome, Cyril, Ambrose, Cassian, speak expressly of this alone, in the passages about to be cited. But I say that this bread is both material, for the sustenance of the body, and spiritual and heavenly bread, suitable for the nourishment of the soul, such as the word of God and the Eucharist. We have need of both, and therefore we ought to ask for both, and for the latter so much more earnestly than the former, as the soul is superior to the body. And this is denoted by the word *supersubstantial*, which S. Jerome explains to mean *superexcellent*, surpassing all created substances, because, as Cassian says, "the sublimity of its magnificence and its sanctity is superior to that of the whole creation." And for this reason, in the Greek, the definite article is added, doubled in truth, τὸν ἄρτον τὸν ἐπιούσιον, *the bread the supersubstantial*. As though it were said, "Give us bread not common, but celestial and divine." Christ alludes to the manna given to the Hebrews, which was a type of the Eucharist. For of manna, it is said in Ps. lxxviii. 24, "He gave them bread from heaven." "Man did eat angels' food." Thus, therefore, manna was food ἐπιούσιος, *i.e.* heavenly and angelic; but much more is the Eucharist. Whence in Wisd. xix. 20, both are called in Greek *Ambrosia*, which is said by the poets to be the food of the gods. S. Ambrose calls the Eucharist this supersubstantial bread. "If,"

he says, "this be *daily* bread, why do you receive it only once a year? So live that you may be fit to receive it daily." Thus the first Christians were accustomed to communicate daily, as is plain from Acts ii. 46. And S. Cyprian (*de Orat. Domin.*) says, "We ask that this bread may be daily given us, lest we, who are in Christ, and daily receive the food of the Eucharist, by the intervention of some grave fault, by abstaining and not communicating, should be kept back from the heavenly Bread, and separated from the Body of Christ, when He Himself has admonished us saying, 'I am the Bread of life, Who came down rom Heaven. If any man shall eat of My Bread he shall live for ever.'" (S. John vi.)

Note that under the term *bread*, by a Hebraism, whatsoever is necessary for food, clothing, habitation, and the life both of the body and the soul, is sought for. "We ask for a sufficiency," says S. Augustine (*Epist.* 121). "By the word *bread* we mean everything."

And forgive, &c. Thus far in these petitions there has been supplication for good things; the last three petitions are deprecations against evil. *Debts*, S. Luke (xi. 4) interprets by ἁμαρτίας, *i.e.*, *sins;* for sin is the greatest debt for the greatest injury, a debt which God exacts. And because this debt is infinite, neither man nor angel can make satisfaction to the rigour of justice, but only Christ, who is God and Man. These *debts* therefore are *sins*, which incur the punishment of hell. The sinful man pawns his soul to the demon, to death and hell; but to God he owes a hundred, yea an infinite number of souls, if he had them, and deaths in hell if he were able to bear them.

Hence the Fathers prove against the Pelagians that no one is without sin. The Pelagians asserted that the righteous pray, *Forgive us our debts*, not for themselves, but for others who have sinned; or if they do say it for themselves, they say it out of humility. S. Augustine confutes both these errors (lib. 2 *de Peccat. Meritis*, c. 10; and lib. 2 *contra Epistolam Parmen.*, c 10.) For we say not, *Forgive the debts of others*, but, Forgive us *our* debts."

In fine, the Council of Milev. (2. c. 1) pronounces an anathema upon those who pretend that *Forgive us our debts* is said by the saints not truly, but out of humility. "For who," it asks, "could endure that in prayer a man should lie not to men, but to God; that he should ask with his lips that his own debts should be forgiven, and should mean in his heart that he has no debts to be forgiven?"

As we forgive, &c. *Debts*, that is, not of money, nor of restitution of fame, or honour, but of injuries done to us, that we should not follow them up with hatred, nor the wish for private vengeance, nor even for public punishment, unless the public welfare, or right reason require it. The word *as* does not denote the measure, or the rule which God follows in the forgiveness of sins: for we ought to pray that more may be forgiven us by God than others owe us—but the inductive cause which may move God to forgive, whence Luke says, *Forgive us our debts, since we also forgive those who are indebted to us.* This is the condition which God requires of us, and if it be fulfilled, He readily forgives, and if it be not fulfilled, He will not forgive, according to that which follows, *For if ye forgive men their offences, your Father which is in heaven will forgive you, but if*, &c. Wherefore S. Cyprian says, that to refuse to forgive is a sin so great that it cannot be blotted out by martyrdom. Thus we read that Sapritius fell from martyrdom, when he was all but holding his crown in his hands. For when he was about to be beheaded for his constancy in the faith, and was told to kneel down, he refused. This was because he would not forgive one Nicephorus, who had offended him, and who prayed him to pardon him. Nicephorus immediately put himself in the place of Sapritius, and thus obtained the palm which the other lost. Thus "the life of the saints is the interpretation of Scripture," as S. Jerome says. Wherefore S. John the Almsgiver brought an angry prince to reconciliation by celebrating mass in his presence; and as he was saying, *Forgive us our debts*, straightway he was silent on purpose; but the prince proceeded, *as we forgive our debtors.* Then the patriarch

turned to him, and said, "Take heed what you say to God in such an awful hour as this, *As I forgive, so do Thou forgive me.* At this admonition the prince was struck as by a thunderbolt, and replied, "Whatsoever Thou, Lord, shalt bid, that will Thy servant do." And immediately he became reconciled to his enemy.

They therefore who are unwilling to forgive injuries, lie before God, and tacitly condemn themselves, and show that they are unworthy of His forgiveness. Let us add that these words have been laid down by Christ as a *formula* of prayer, that by them we should be admonished to forgive those who trespass against us. *We forgive, i.e.*, as we ought and wish to forgive, but as our infirmity is not sufficent for this, do Thou, O Lord, give strength, and change our heart that we may be able to do it.

And lead us not, &c. *Lead*, not *impel*, as Calvin would interpret. For "God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man," saith S. James (i. 13). God only permits us to be led into temptation. So the Fathers and all Catholics. In a manner, God is said to do what He permits, since nothing can be done without His suffering it to be. The meaning then is—1. Permit us not to be led into temptation in such a manner, at least, that we are overcome by it, as fishes and birds are taken in a net. "Let us not," as S. Augustine says, "be bereft of Thy help, so that we should be deceived and consent to any temptation."

2. Suffer not temptation to befall us. And yet in the *Lives of the Fathers*, we read, that certain saints wished for temptations as a means of increasing virtue, through fortitude of mind and trust in God. Whence S. James says, "My brethren count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." For by temptation we are proved and exercised, we fight and are perfected. Christ therefore puts us in mind of our infirmity, and that because of it, we ought not to expose ourselves to temptations; but should, as far as may be, ward them off, and pray against them. And we can only overcome temptation by the help of God's grace. Wherefore in temptation we must continually and ardently pray for God's help. As S. Peter Chrysologus says, (*Serm.* 44), "He

goes into temptation, who goes not to prayer." And S. Gregory Nyssen says (*Orat.* 1 *de Orat. Domin.*), "If prayer precede business, sin findeth no way of access to the mind."

But deliver us from evil. That is, from *temptation*, for of temptation the preceding petition speaks. 2. *From the devil*, who is the president and artificer of temptation. Thus Tertullian and S. Chrysostom. He is called in Greek ὁ πονηρὸς, the evil, or malignant one. As it is said (1 John v.), "That wicked one toucheth him not." And, "Ye have overcome the wicked one." For the devil tempts all by means of wicked men, the world, and the flesh. 3. More fully, S. Cyprian understands every evil to be intended here, everything which either incites to sin, or is a hindrance to virtue. And thus there is a clear distinction between this petition, the last and seventh, from the one which precedes it. Hear S. Cyprian: "When we say, *Deliver us from evil*, nothing remains, which we need ask for further: when once we ask for the protection of God against evil, and obtain it, we stand secure against everything which the devil or the world can do. For what dread of the world can there be to any one whose protector is God in heaven?"

Amen. This, says S. Jerome, is the seal of the Lord's Prayer, approving and wishing that thus it may be.

Observe in the Greek MSS. is added, *For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever. Amen.* So also read the Syriac, Chrysostom, Theophylact, Euthymius. But the Greeks seem to have added this by a pious custom, similar to that by which they add to the angelic salutation, *For thou hast brought forth our Saviour*, or to the Psalms the *Gloria Patri.* The *Codex Vaticanus* omits this doxology: and among the Latins, Tertullian, Cyprian, Jerome, Augustine, and Ambrose.

In the *Bibliotheca Patrum*, tom. 5, there is a paraphase of the Lord's Prayer composed by S. Francis, partly literal, partly mystical, which is so sublime, wise, and fervent, that I have thought it well to append it in this place.

"*Our Father:* O most holy Creator, our Redeemer, our

Saviour, our Comforter. *Which art in Heaven,* in the angels, in the saints, illuminating them with the knowledge of Thyself, for Thou, O Lord, art Light, inflaming them with Thy Divine love; for Thou, Lord, art love, dwelling in them and filling them with blessing; for Thou, O Lord, art the chief and everlasting good, from whom are all, and without whom is no good. *Hallowed be Thy name:* that we may have a clear knowledge of Thee, that we may know the breadth of Thy kindness, the length of Thy promises, the height of Thy majesty, and the depth of Thy judgments. *Thy kingdom come:* that Thou mayest reign in us by Thy grace, and make us to come to Thy kingdom, where there is the open vision of Thee, and where Thy love is perfected, and where Thy company and the fruition of Thee are everlasting: that we may love Thee with all our heart, by ever meditating upon Thee, by always desiring Thee with all our soul, by directing all our intentions to Thee, and by seeking Thy honour in all things, and by obediently corresponding to Thy love with all our strength, and with all the faculties of our souls and bodies, and by loving our neighbours as ourselves, by drawing all men unto Thy love with all our might, by rejoicing in others' prosperity as though it were our own, and suffering with them in adversity, and by giving no offence to any one. *Give us this day our daily bread:* give us this day Thy beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, in memory, in understanding, in reverence for the love which He had towards us, and of the things which He has done, spoken, and suffered for us. *And forgive us our debts,* through Thy mercy, and the unspeakable virtue of the Passion of Thy well-beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the merits and the intercessions of the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the elect. *As we forgive them that trespass against us:* and because we do not fully forgive, do Thou, O Lord, cause us perfectly to forgive, that we may love our enemies as ourselves, and devoutly intercede for them, that we may render evil for evil unto no man, but strive to be profitable unto all in Thee. *And lead us not into temptation:* either secret or open, sudden or habitual. *But deliver us from evil:* past, present, and to come. *Amen,* freely

and spontaneously." Thus was S. Francis accustomed to say, *Our Father*, at all the hours.

For if ye forgive men their trespasses (Gr. ἁμαρτίας, sins, *i.e.*, offences against you) . . . *will also forgive you.* If, that is, ye fulfil the other things which are required, viz., contrition and confession.

The *Gloss* has, "God has placed it in our power, either to provoke His judgment against us or to make His sentence merciful. This only does the Judge require of us, that such as we would that He should be to us, we should show ourselves to our brethren."

Moreover, when ye fast, &c. Christ has taught the way to pray, He now teaches how to fast, because prayer without fasting is weak, as S. Chrysostom says. He teaches that it should be in earnest, and in secret, not with the object of pleasing men but God. For *sad*, the Greek has σκυθρωποὶ, *i.e.*, *with a severe and lowering countenance*, which is in opposition to being ἱλαροὶ, or *pleasant* and *joyful*; σκυθρωποὶ is derived from σκυθροὶ *sad, disagreeable*, and ὤπα *the face.*

Disfigure, Gr. ἀφανίζουσι, which S. Jerome translates by *demoliuntur*, S. Hilary by *conficiunt*, and S. Chrysostom by *corrupt;* others better, *obscure their faces, i.e.*, by affecting, putting on severity, pallor, sadness of countenance. Others translate *labefactant, obliterant, perdunt*, and *velut e medio tollunt: i.e., make their face as it were not to appear*, which the Vulgate represents by *exterminate.* For ἀφανίζειν is, *to make to vanish, to take the face out of sight*, as those who use varnish; such are they who by a pretended emaciation and sorrowful pallor feign sanctity. Such are hypocrites, as the Scribes were. Hear S. Jerome, "Exiles *exterminantur*, who are sent away *extra terminos*, beyond the boundaries of their country." Then he explains *exterminate* by *demoliuntur.* "The hypocrite demolishes his countenance that he may feign sadness: and when perchance his mind is joyful he may carry grief in his face."

But thou . . . Father in secret. Who hides His essence and His majesty, and who is as much in secret as in public places, and

who sees as clearly the hidden things of the heart as the manifest things of our works.

It was a practice with the inhabitants of Palestine, in common with other Orientals, on holy days and other joyful occasions, especially at feasts, to anoint and wash the face, both for purposes of refreshment, for beauty, and for a sweet smell. Palestine being a very hot country the climate occasions profuse perspiration. They wash the face then to wipe away the perspiration, and anoint to banish unpleasant odours. This is clear from Ruth iii. 3, Judith x. 3, 2 Sam. xii. 20, Luke vii. 46. When the Magdalene anointed Christ the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. (John xii. 3.) Therefore in times of affliction and mourning they abstained from anointing and washing.

Observe here a catachresis, similar to that in chap. iii. 6, and elsewhere. For Christ does not here command any actual anointing, but joyfulness and the putting away all outward signs of fasting. *Anoint thine head, i.e.*, be joyful, and present the appearance of hilarity, as though thou wert anointed with oil, which is the symbol and the cause of gladness, according to the words "That he may make his face joyful with oil." (Ps. civ. 15.) Yea, that thou shouldst so conceal thy fasting, as to put on the symbol of feasting, namely, anointing and washing. Thus S. Jerome. With this agrees that golden saying of S. Syncletica, preserved in the *Lives of the Fathers*, "As a treasure manifested is quickly spent, so virtue which is made known, or becomes public, is destroyed. For as wax melteth at the face of the fire, so does a soul become worthless by praise, and lose the vigour of its virtues."

Lay not up, &c. Gr. *Treasure not for yourselves treasures.* Christ here shows which are the true riches, and which the false—the true, heavenly; the false, earthly. Note the three modes of corruption. The moth corrupts garments; rust, gold and silver; thieves steal all other things.

Christ here calls men away from the desire of riches by three considerations. 1. Because they are fleeting and corruptible.

2. Because they darken the mind. 3. Because they draw the whole mind to themselves, so that it cannot serve God, for no one is able to serve two masters such as God and mammon.

But lay up for yourselves, not for children or grandchildren, not for ungrateful heirs, but for *yourselves, i.e., for your soul.* "What folly," says S. Chrysostom, "to leave your treasures in the place from whence ye are going away, instead of sending them before you whither ye are going." Further on he says, "If you should wish to behold the heart of a man who loveth gold, you will find it like a garment that is being eaten away by ten thousand worms, for you will find it perforated by cares on every side, putrefying with sins, full of corruption. But not like this is the soul of the man who is voluntarily poor. Rather, it doth shine like gold, it is resplendent like jewels, it blossoms like the rose. There is no moth there, no thief, no anxiety about the things of this life, but like the angels, so it liveth. It is not subject to the devils, it doth not stand beside the king, but it standeth near to God. Its warfare is not with men, but with angels. It hath no need of servants, rather doth it subject the passions unto it as its servants. What can be more noble than such a poor man as this? Be it that he hath not horses and a chariot. But what need hath he of them, who shall be borne above the clouds to be with Christ?"

For where, &c. *Your treasure, i.e.*, what thou valuest, what thou lovest and delightest in, what is the dearest to thee of all things, on which thou spendest thy time and thoughts.

Dost thou wish to know what is thy treasure, what thou lovest and valuest? Consider what thou most often hast in thy mind. If thou thinkest most frequently of heavenly things, then thou lovest heaven; but if of earthly things, then thy treasure is on earth. Like a mole, thou buriest thy heart in the earth.

The light of the body, &c. Those who have bad sight, says S. Jerome, see many lamps instead of one. A single and clear eye beholds things simply and purely as they are.

But if thine eye be evil, &c. A single eye is one that is sound, and free from humours which affect and disturb the sight. *Thy*

whole body will be luminous, as though it be full of eyes; because the light of the eye going before will direct all thine actions in the right way. *But if thine eye be evil*, Gr. πονηρὸν, *i.e.*, badly affected, and full of vitiated humours, *thy whole body will be dark*, because it will lack light and a guide, *i.e.*, the illumination and guidance of thine eye. *If therefore the light* (of thine eye) *that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness!* For the rest of the body which is naturally dark, since it has no light except from the eyes, if it be deprived of them, how dark must it be! How will it go astray, and grope in blindness. "What blackness of darkness will there be in thee!" says S. Hilary.

These words are a parable, like several others of the sayings of Christ in this sermon. By the *eye* we may understand with SS. Jerome, Chrysostom, Jansen, Maldonatus, Toletus, and others, the *mind* or *understanding*. For what the eye is to the body the understanding is to the mind. As the eye directs the body, so does the practical understanding direct the mind. Whence the error and fault of the soul springs in action from the error and fault of the understanding, and this again frequently arises from depraved inclinations and covetous desires. For what the desire lusteth after, that the understanding affecteth, so that it judgeth it to be good and sought after. This has to do with what He has spoken a little before: *Where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also.* He here explains what He means by the heart—calling it the eye of the mind—*i.e.*, the practical understanding, which goes before and directs all our actions by its light. Christ wishes to teach that the mind cannot be right and pure, nor consequently the actions which flow from it be pure where the heart is blinded by avarice and cupidity.

2. We may with S. Augustine and S. Gregory (lib. 28 *Moral.* c. 6), and Bede, understand by the *eye* the *intention* of the mind. For this moves, rules, and bends the mind and the understanding whithersoever it will. If it be directed purely to God and divine things as its end and aim, it will cause that the work originating in the mind shall be altogether pure and holy. But if the intention

be depraved and impure, it will make the work flowing from it, even if it be a good work, become impure, evil, and vitiated. For in the whole chapter, from the first verse, Christ demands a good intention, and requires it in alms, in prayer, in fasting, indeed in every good work. S. Luke (xi. 36) adds some things to this parable, which will be expounded in the proper place.

No man can serve two masters, not only opposite but even different masters. It is a proverb, signifying that it is a rare and difficult thing to satisfy two masters of different dispositions and tempers, or to belong equally to both. Christ applies this proverb to avarice and the religion and worship of God. It is impossible to be the servant of God and also of money. Wherefore if you desire to serve God and give Him your heart, you must tear it away from gold and riches. This is Christ's third argument and the most powerful of all, by which He calls away the Scribes and all men from the love of riches, because it is indeed impossible to serve them and serve God.

For either he will hate the one, &c. Instead of *hold to,* Augustine reads *will suffer, endure (patietur),* and explains it to refer to mammon, or riches, meaning that mammon is so imperious and hard a master, that the avaricious serve him with hard servitude, that they do not love him, but that they bear or suffer his harsh slavery. Vatablus translates, *will owe himself to one—i.e.,* will give him his heart, will render him a loving servitude. The meaning of this disjunctive sentence is: "The slave of two masters will not in reality serve two, but will either hate one and love the other, or *vice versa,* will love and sustain the one, will hate and despise the other."

Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Ye cannot give yourselves up to God and the desire of riches, so as to set your heart upon both, to expend your cares and works and labours upon both, especially since God so wills to be worshipped and loved above all things, that He will suffer no rival in the love of Himself.

Observe, the Heb. מטמון *matmon,* the Chald. *mamon,* the Syriac *mamona,* as S. Jerome says, mean riches and treasures which rich

men hide in secret receptacles, from the root מטמן *to hide.* Or as Angelus Caninius says from *aman*, to *strengthen, establish.* For as it is said in Prov. x. 15, "The substance of a rich man is the city of his strength." (Vulg.) So, too, riches are called in Hebrew *charil*, from strength, because they make the rich strong and powerful. And for this reason mamon is more correctly spelt with one *m*, as it is in the Chald. and Syriac books. Also *gain* in the Punic language, which is akin to Hebrew, is called *mammona*, as S. Augustine tells us (*lib. de Ser. Dom. in Mont.* c. 22). Hence also the Persian version of this passage renders *mammon* by *transitory riches and possessions.*

Observe, Christ does not say, "Ye cannot possess riches and God," for Abraham, Isaac, David, Solomon, and many saints had both; but they did not set their hearts upon riches, but used them for pious purposes. But He said, "Ye cannot *serve* God and riches." For he who serves mammon is the slave of riches. He does not rule them as their master, but he is ruled by them as their slave, so as to undertake all labours and sufferings which the desire of wealth suggests to him. Verily this is a hard and miserable servitude. But "to serve God is to reign." Well does S. Bernard say (*Ser.* 21 *in Cant.*), "The covetous man hungers after earthly things like a beggar—the believer despises them like a lord. The former in possessing them is a beggar, the latter, by despising them, keeps them."

Hear S. Augustine (lib. 4 *de Civit.* c. 21 —"The heathen were wont to commend themselves to the goddess of money, that they might be rich—to the god Æsculanus, and his son, Argentinus, that they might have bronze and silver money. They made Æsculanus the father of Argentinus, because bronze money was first in use, afterwards silver. I really wonder why Argentinus did not beget Aurinus, because gold followed silver coin." The reason why money was made a goddess was because of her power and empire; for, as it is said in Ecclus. x., "All things are obedient to money." By money are procured dignities, wine, feasts, clothes, horses, chariots, and what not? Whence Hosea (xii. 8) says of

such men, "Verily I am made rich; I have found my idol." (Vulg.) Hence also Juvenal (*Satr.* 1) says, "With us the majesty of riches is the most sacred of all things." And Petronius Arbiter makes them equal, or indeed superior to Jupiter.

> "Be money there, ask what you please,
> 'Twill come: your chest great Jove will seize."

Well does S. Jerome say (*Epist.* 28 *ad Lucinium*), "Ye cannot, saith the Lord, serve God and mammon. To put away gold is the work of beginners, not of the advanced Christian. Crates, the Theban, did that, so did Antisthenes. But to offer ourselves to God is the distinguishing mark of Christians and Apostles: for they, casting with the widow the two farthings of their poverty into the treasury, delivered to the Lord all the living that they had, and deserved to hear the words, 'Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.'"

Ver. 25.—*Wherefore I say unto you*, &c. *For your life*, Vulg., *anima*, "for your soul." For it has need of food, not strictly speaking, but that it may be kept in the body, and animate the body. And again, in the soul resides all sense of food, all taste of and pleasure in it. *For the soul, i.e., for the life*, as S. Augustine says, because the soul is the cause of life.

For, *take no thought*, the Greek has μὴ μεριμνᾶτε, take no anxious thought, lest, through care, ye be troubled with anxiety and distress; for the desire of gathering wealth divides the mind, and distracts it with various cogitations, cares, and anxieties, and as it were cuts it in twain. Christ, then, does not forbid provident diligence and labour in procuring the necessaries of life for ourselves and those who belong to us, as the Euchitæ maintained, who wished to pray always without working, against whom S. Augustine wrote a book, *On the Work of Monks*. But Christ forbids anxious, untimely, fearful solicitude, care that distrusts God, a heart grovelling in the earth, and distracted from the service of God.

And in order that He may remove it from us, He gives us seven reasons or arguments against it. The 1st is in this verse

in the words which immediately follow; this reason is from the care which God has of our bodies. The 2nd reason is drawn from the birds, for whom God cares and whom He feeds. The 3rd, in ver. 27, from the uselessness of all our care without God. The 4th, in ver. 28, from the lilies and the grass, which God clothes and adorns. 5th, in ver. 31, because such a care is fit only for pagans, not for Christians. 6th, in ver. 32, because God knows all things, and it pertains to His providence to provide us sustenance, that He should add food to those who seek the kingdom of God. The 7th, ver. 34, because sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. So many arguments does Christ use, because by far the greater part of mankind labour under this undue anxiety about providing food and raiment for themselves and their families, which is a great misery, and more than asinine toil.

Is not the life, &c. This is the first reason drawn from a minor to a major probability, as though He said, "God who gave us our souls and bodies, yea, created them out of nothing, and who continually, as it were, recreates them, He surely will give those things which are less, as food and clothes, without which the body cannot subsist. As S. Chrysostom says, "When God is our Feeder, there is no need to be anxious, for 'the rich have wanted, and suffered hunger, but they that seek after the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good.'" (Ps. xxxiv. Vulg.)

Behold the fowls of the air, &c. *Are ye not much better than they?* Gr. μᾶλλον διαφέρετε αὐτῶν *Are ye not very different from them?* This is the second argument. If God feeds the irrational birds, who are not anxious about their living, and gives them corn and food which they have not laboured for, how much more will He feed you, who are reasoning men, created after His Image, you who are His sons and heirs, and redeemed with the Blood of Christ. He compares men not to the oxen of the earth, but to the birds of heaven, to teach them that they ought to be heavenly, and be like birds, and fly away in spirit from earth to heaven, and expect from God necessary food both for their souls and bodies. For the birds are contented with provision for the day,

and are not anxious about to-morrow, but rest calmly on God's providence, and give up their leisure time to flight and song. "Christ," says S. Chrysostom, "might have brought forward the examples of Moses, Elias, John, who were not anxious about their food, but He preferred to take the irrational birds, that He might the more deeply impress His hearers." For why cannot men do what birds do? Why should men be anxious when birds are not?

S. Francis had a wonderful delight in birds, especially in larks, and used to invite them to sing the praises of God. So a little after his death, some larks came and assisted at his funeral. In a vast multitude they flew to the roof of the house in which his body lay, and circling around it with gladness more than common, they celebrated the praise and glory of the Saint. He was accustomed to compare the brethren of his Order to larks, and to exhort them to imitate them. "For the lark," he said, "has a crest like a cap. So also the Friars minor wear a cowl, or hood, to put them in mind that they ought to imitate the humility and innocence of boys, who hide their faces in their caps. 2. The lark is of an ashen colour, and the frock of the brethren is of an ashen grey, to put them in mind of the saying of God to the first-formed man, "Remember that thou art dust, or ashes, and unto ashes thou shalt return." 3. Larks live in poverty without anxiety, they pluck the grains which the earth affords; so also the brethren profess poverty; they live by begging, without care, placing their hope of a harvest in the providence of God and the charity of the faithful. 4. Larks, as soon as they have found a grain and eaten it, are borne by a direct flight aloft towards heaven, that they may shun the eyes of beholders, singing as they fly, and returning thanks to God, the Parent and Nourisher of all creatures. The brethren do the same, "for man hath eaten angels' food," *i.e.*, bread asked of alms. And the angels incite those who are rich to give the brethren bread when they beg. Lastly, larks are called in Latin, *alaudæ*, from *laus*, praise, because they praise God by their constant songs. So also the

brethren despise earthly things, and seek for heavenly, because they are strangers on earth, and citizens of heaven, and they know they have been called by God for this object, that they may praise Him perpetually with psalmody, by preaching and by a holy life. (See Luke Wadding, *in Annal. Minor. A. C.* 1226, *num.* 39 *et alii.*) Listen to S. Ambrose (*Serm. in c.* 1. *Malachi*): "The birds," he says, "give thanks for worthless food, wilt thou banquet on the most precious feasts and be ungrateful? Who then that has the feeling of a man should not blush to close the day without the singing of psalms, when the birds themselves manifest their exceeding gladness by the melody of their hymns? And who would not sound His praises in spiritual songs, whose praises the birds pronounce with their modulated notes? Imitate, then, my brother, the tiny birds by giving thanks to thy Creator every morning and evening. And if thou hast greater devotion, then imitate the nightingale for whom the day is not long enough to sing praise, but makes sweet the night watches by her melody. So do thou, passing the day in giving thanks and praise, add to this employment the hours of the night."

Which of you by taking thought, Gr. μεριμνῶν, *i.e., being solicitous, anxiously thoughtful*, or *careful*. This is Christ's third argument against cares. "If the thought and solicitude and labour be utterly vain, by which a man would wish to devise some plan whereby he might add one cubit to his stature, so that he should be higher or taller, yea though he should cogitate for a thousand years, and torment himself by devising plans, he would never accomplish it; how much more vain is that anxious care by which men strive to prolong life by anxiety and their own pains. For as it is the office of God alone to increase the body which He has created, and make it attain its proper stature, so much more is it His by His fatherly providence, to preserve and lengthen out to its appointed end the life which he has given, and supply it with necessary food."

Euthymius here takes notice that a cubit is spoken of because

a cubit is the proper measurement for a man's height. For every properly proportioned man is four cubits in height, and four in width; that is, when his arms are extended from his shoulders. This extension of the arms is the measure of every man's stature. And thus man is found to be four-square, that is to say, as broad as he is long; to teach him to be four-sided and solid in constancy and virtue.

Vers. 28, 29.—*And why take ye thought for raiment?* &c. This is the fourth argument, drawn from the beauty of lilies. He intimates that as lilies grow, and are nourished, they are clothed in their petals as with raiment. The beauty, fragrance, grace, and elegance with which God adorns lilies are very wonderful. (See Pliny, lib. 21, c. 5.)

Christ makes mention of lilies in connection with Solomon's robe, or cloak, because it was of a shining white colour, and ornamented with flowers of lilies, worked or embroidered upon it with a needle, and vying with lilies in its beauty. Such was the nature of the robes worn by kings and princes. Hear Pausanias (*in Eliacis*, lib. 5); where he describes an image of Jupiter: "Besides other things, he had a pallium of cloth of gold, on which were embroidered animals of many kinds, but especially lilies." (See Pineda, lib. 6 *de rebus Salomonis*, c. 5.

Anagogically, lilies and vestments embroidered with lilies represent the robe of glory and immortality with which Christ shall clothe His elect in heaven. Wherefore, Ps. xlv. is entitled, *For Lilies*, or *For those who shall be changed*, viz., from death to immortality, from misery to glory. Wherefore Hilary says that by the lilies which neither toil, nor spin, the brightness of the heavenly angels is signified, upon whom, in a manner surpassing the erudition of human learning, the brightness of glory has been placed by God. And since, in the Resurrection, all the saints shall be like the angels, He desires us to hope for the robe of glory after the fashion of angelic splendour.

Moreover how lovely lilies are, and how they adorn princes at their nuptials, especially Solomon and Christ, and how greatly

Solomon delighted in them is plain from his Song of Songs, where he often says of the bridegroom, "He feedeth among lilies." And again, "I am the flower of the field, and the lily of the valleys." (Vulg.).

Now Christ prefers the loveliness of lilies to the garments of Solomon, which were made of silver tissue, embroidered with lilies, because they being natural surpass all the elegance of art, which is nothing more than an imitation and adumbration of reality. For art is, as it were, the ape of nature, and as much as a shadow is surpassed by the reality which causes it, so much is nature superior to art. As S. Jerome says, "What silk, what regal purple, what figures of embroidery, can be compared to flowers? What is as red as a rose? What is as fair as a lily? And that the purple of the violet is surpassed by no marine shell-fish is the judgment of the eye rather than of speech."

Tropologically, lilies are virgins, who, by increasing in virtues, grow in God, and are clothed with the garments of grace now and of glory hereafter. Whence it is said in Cant., "As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters."

For if God so clothe, &c. To the beautiful lilies he adds the humble grass and hay for greater emphasis. The Greek is χόρτον, *herb* or *grass*. "If God clothe the grass in the fields with such greenness, with such fair blades and germs, which to-day is green and to-morrow is cut down and dry, and becomes hay, and is cast into the oven or furnace to heat it that it may bake bread, how much more will He clothe you, who are believing men, and His own sons and friends? You, I say, who, without any reason, are of little faith in the providence of God?" Observe that by this rebuke Christ shows that the common anxiety about food and raiment is born of distrust in Divine providence. For if men thoroughly trusted in it they would not be so anxious, but would securely rest upon it. And then, with moderate labour and trusting in Him, God would provide them with all needful things.

Ver. 31.—*For after all these things do the Gentiles seek.* This is the fifth argument, that anxiety about these earthly things is the mark

of a Pagan, and does not become Christians, who believe in the providence of God, yea, who feel and experience it every day.

For your heavenly Father knoweth, &c. The sixth argument. God truly knows what ye have need of in the way of food and clothes; He sees and beholds your wants, because He is God. Therefore He will provide for them, because He loves you as His children, for He is your Father, and He is able to provide, because He is your Heavenly and Almighty Father. Why then do ye not roll off all your care upon Him? For He both knows and is willing and able to succour your necessity. Christ adds in Luke xii. 29, *Neither be ye of doubtful mind.* Gr. μὴ μετεωρίζεσθε, on which see what I have there said. Whence S. Francis was wont to give his brethren no other provision for a journey than the words of the Psalmist, "Cast thy care upon the Lord, and he will nourish thee." (Ps. lv. 22.) Where for *care* the Hebrew has *jehabcha*, which the Chaldee renders, *thy hope;* S. Jerome, *thy love;* Vatablus, *thy weight, thy burden, i.e., thy solicitudes, thine anxieties, thy troubles, thy poverty*, and *whatever burdens thee and weighs thee down.* The Roman Psalter has, *thy cogitation.* The root of the word is יהב *yahab*, signifying *the desire of one who asks, whatever stirs and draws out thy anxious prayer. And He shall nourish thee.* The Hebrew is, *shall sustain, shall perfect, shalt take care of thee.* S. Peter says, "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." And S. Paul writes to the Philippians, "Be careful for nothing, but in all prayer and supplication with giving of thanks, let your requests be made known unto God." See what is there said. We have a narrow mind, slender shoulders, a little strength. But God has the far-reaching eyes of His providence, and corresponding shoulders. For He is the true Atlas, who sustains heaven and earth upon His shoulders.

Ver. 33.—*Seek ye therefore . . . all those things shall be added.* Gr. προσθήσεται *shall be set before you*, as SS. Cyprian and Augustine read, as bread and meat are set before a hungry beggar in a rich man's house. *First*, not so much in time as in dignity says S. Augustine, in estimation and appreciation. Seek

chiefly and above all things the kingdom of God, esteem it above all other things, count it as of highest value, but count temporal goods of small worth, and as only to be sought after in subordination to the kingdom of God, as things which are added by God, overweight, so to say, so far, that is, as they conduce to our real good.

Wherefore they err who say:—

> "O citizens, O citizens, first money get:
> Then, after that, on virtue's crown your hearts be set."

Such is the error of those who at this day seek after and procure rich appointments, benefices, dignities, bishoprics, with all diligence, but think little of the responsibility and their own capabilities, and little of their own eternal salvation. *The kingdom of God, i.e.*, His heavenly kingdom, *eternal glory and happiness, and His righteousness*, viz., the means which lead us to the kingdom of God, such as God's grace, virtue, good and righteous works, by which we become righteous, or more just before God, works which God has prescribed and commanded that we should do them.

All these things shall be added. Therefore they are not the reward of good works, for this is wholly kept for us in heaven, says S. Augustine, but they shall be added as overweight, a little trifling addition to the infinite reward.

Take therefore no thought for the morrow, i.e., for time future. The seventh argument, Leave for the morrow, *i.e.*, for the time to come, the care and anxiety of the morrow. Why do ye wish to be anxious and wretched before the time? For even though to-day ye summon to you to-morrow's cares, to-morrow will, on that account, bring you not one care the less. Let therefore each care be kept for its own time, to-day's for to-day, to-morrow's for to-morrow; thus solicitude being divided into parts will be diminished, will become lighter, and will be borne more easily. Verily if a soul when it enters a human body could see all the poverty, pain and trouble and anguish, which in a lifetime, day after day, minute after minute, it would suffer, it would shudder and despair, and

would not enter the body. Wherefore God hides from us the afflictions which we shall have to undergo, that we may take them day by day, and so sustain them. Wisely does S. Chrysostom say in this passage, "Far be it from us that the cares of another day should bruise us. For thou knowest not that thou shalt behold the dawning of that day on account of which thou tormentest thyself with anxiety." And "What does it profit to care about future contingencies which, it may be, will never happen?"

Similarly the poet sings—

"Thou knowest not what the late eventide may bring."

And the Psalmist says, "Day unto day uttereth a word, and night unto night showeth knowledge." (Ps. xix. 3, Vulg.)

Christ here does not forbid all provision for future time, as for instance storing up the harvests of corn and wine and oil: for prudence and economy require this to be done: and this is what Joseph did so prudently in Egypt. (Gen. xli. 35.) Whence S. Anthony (*apud Cassian. Collat.* 2) says, that some who would keep nothing for to-morrow were deceived, and could not bring the task they had begun to a suitable end. Christ only forbids useless anxieties about the future, unseasonable cares, as when a man is anxious about those things the care of which does not, according to right reason, pertain to present but to future time.

Solicitude then is of two kinds, the first moderate and business-like, such as right reason dictates ought to be employed for such or such an affair or business: this is laudable and needful, with all prudence and virtue. The other is immoderate, vain, and unbecoming, by which a timid or covetous man vainly torments himself about future events which are altogether uncertain, and can neither be foreseen nor delayed. This sort of care which the Greeks call μεριμνα is *anxious care, worry;* and it is this which Christ forbids. Whence the *Gloss* says, "Not labour, or provident care, is forbidden, but anxiety which chokes the mind."

Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. That, is the day's trouble, care, affliction. Every day brings to man its own trouble and

solicitude. The Greek is κακία, *evil*, *badness*. It is put here for κακώσις the bringing of evil, or afflicting. Thus Jacob said to Pharoah, "Few and evil," that is, miserable, "have been the days of the years of my pilgrimage." (Gen. xlvii. 9.) So, on the other hand, goodness or good, is to be taken for joyful, glad, pleasant, as Ps. cxxxiii., "Behold how good and joyful a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity." Thus SS. Jerome, Chrysostom, Augustine, &c. S. Chrysostom gives the reason, "That He may rebuke them more sharply, He has almost personified time itself, and introduced it as though itself afflicted by men, as though it cried out against them on account of the superfluous affliction which they impose upon it." Hear also S. Augustine: "Necessity He calls evil, because it is for a punishment: it pertains to mortality, which we have deserved by sin. When we see the servant of God providing for necessary things, we do not think he is acting contrary to the commandment of God. For the Lord, as an example, kept a bag. And in the Acts of the Apostles we read, that necessary things were provided for the future on account of the threatened famine. We are therefore not forbidden to provide, but to fight on account of those things."

CHAPTER VII.

1 Christ, ending his sermon on the mount, reproveth rash judgment, 6 forbiddeth to cast holy things to dogs, 7 Exhorteth to prayer, 13 To enter in at the strait gate, 15 To beware of false prophets, 21 and not to be hearers, but doers of the word.

JUDGE not, that ye be not judged.

2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye: and, behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye?

5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

14 Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life; and few there be that find it.

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves:

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

29 For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes.

Judge not, rashly and malignantly, *that ye*, &c. Christ does not here prohibit the public judgments of magistrates, by which they condemn the guilty and absolve the innocent, for this is necessary in all commonwealths, but only private judgments, and that when they are rash, envious, detractive, for they are repugnant to charity and justice, yea to God Himself, whose office of judgment is usurped. For we have not been set to be judges but companions of our neighbours. Wherefore if we have an evil opinion of him we do him an injury. And we take away his good fame if we let this judgment go abroad; for reputation is a great good, greater far than riches. So S. Jerome, Bede, and Basil. The *Gloss* says, "There is scarcely any one who is found to be free

from this fault." Hear S. Augustine (102 *Serm. de Temp.*): "Concerning those things, then, which are known to God, unknown to us, we judge our neighbours at our peril. Of this the Lord hath said, *Judge not*. But concerning things which are open and public evils, we may and ought to judge and rebuke, but still with charity and love, hating not the man, but the sin, detesting not the sick man, but the disease. For unless the open adulterer, thief, habitual drunkard, traitor, were judged and punished, that would be fulfilled which the blessed martyr Cyprian hath said, 'He who soothes a sinner with flattering words, administers fuel to his sin.'" S. Anthony gives the cause of perverseness in rash judgment, when he says, "We are often deceived as to the motives of actions. The judgment of God, who sees all things, is another thing from ours. But it is right that we should suffer one with another, and bear one another's burdens." So S. Athanasius, in his Life.

That ye be not judged, i.e., neither by men nor God. Ye will escape very many unjust judgments of others, or, anyhow, ye will not experience the severe judgment of God. Hear S. Augustine: "The temerity wherewith thou dost punish another will punish thyself. Injustice always injures him who does the wrong."

Some MSS. add here, *Condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned,* but it seems to have been added from Luke vi. 37.

Leontius, Bishop of Cyprus, in his Life of S. John the Almoner, c. 35, relates that Vitalius, who converted many harlots, was slapped on the face, and judged to be a fornicator, by a certain person; but this judge was in turn slapped on the face by the devil, and possessed by him, and could only be delivered by coming as a suppliant to the cell of Vitalius, who was dead. When he came thither, there was found written on the pavement, by the hand of God, "O ye men of Alexandria, judge not before the time until the Lord shall come." Wisely saith S. Bernard (*Serm.* 40 *in Cant.*), "Make an excuse for the intention with which a thing is done, when you cannot excuse the thing itself; set it down, if possible, to ignorance, inadvertence."

For with what judgment, &c. Says S. Chrysostom, "In what way thine own sins shall be examined, thou hast thyself provided a rule, by judging severely the things in which thy neighbour has offended, for judgment without mercy shall be awarded to him who has shown no mercy,' says S. James" (ii. 13).

Cassian (lib. 5 *de Instit. renunc.* c. 40) says that a certain abbot called Maches was wont to relate of himself, that, by God's permission, he had fallen into three faults for which he had been accustomed to judge others, and had been punished for them. S. Dorotheus (*Doctrina* 6), in a chapter upon not judging, relates that an angel once brought the soul of an adulterer to a certain old man, who had condemned him, and said, "Lo, here is the dead man whom thou hast judged. Where am I to take his soul, to heaven or to hell? Thou hast appointed thyself the judge of the dead, in the place of Christ. Judge then this soul." At these words the old man was pricked with compunction, begged for pardon, and did penance for the rest of his life. Matthew Rader, the Jesuit, among many other golden sayings, has this—"A crooked measuring-rule makes even straight things appear crooked." Thus melancholy, and the proclivity to suspect evil of others engendered by it, is most deceptive: it deceives itself, and then goes on to deceive others. Wherefore let him who suffers from this disease learn, from the experience of his own suspicions, that they are for the most part false and deceptive, and so let him say, 'I will no longer give credit to you, for so far I have found you liars.'"

With what measure, &c. This is an adage, signifying the same thing. According to the rule, or measure, by which thou judgest others, so shalt thou be judged thyself. If thou shalt show thyself kindly in judging, then will others judge thee kindly: if thou judgest others severely, then severely will others judge thee. Understand here similar, not equal measure. For our measure cannot equal God's. His severity and His mercy both far surpass ours. Yet is His severity less than our faults. For God punishes sin less than it deserves. S. James follows Christ the Lord, when

he says, "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. Whoso speaketh evil of his brother, or judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law" (iv. 11). See what I have there said.

And why beholdest thou? Gr. οὐ κατανοεῖς, *dost not perceive. The mote*, Gr. τὸ κάρφος, that is, *bit of straw*, or *chaff*, or *tiny particle of wood*, such as easily get into the eye. These things are put in contrast with a heavy beam or block. The *mote* signifies little faults and defects; the *beam* denotes greater crimes. There is an elegant allusion to the *sight* of the eye. The eye does not see itself and its own blemishes, but those of others. In a similar manner the critics see not, nor think of their own defects, but those of others. To their own they are as blind as moles: for those of others they have the eyes of lynxes. They take offence at the very least faults of others, but view with complacency and approval their own huge faults. To this refers the proverb, "We do not see the bag on our own backs" about which Æsop has a fable. "Every man," he says, "carries two wallets, one on his breast, the other hanging from his shoulders on his back, and into the first we put other people's faults, but our own into the bag behind. This is that selfishness (φιλαυτία) which is innate in men.

By the same fable an abbot dealt with and corrected his criticizing anchorites. (*Vit. Pat.* lib. 5, *libello* 9, *num.* 9.) He filled a sack with a great quantity of sand, and put it on his back, and carried before him in his hand a basket with a very small quantity of sand. When asked why he did this, he replied, "That bag which holds most sand is my sins, and because they are many, I have put them on my back lest I should grieve and lament over them; but the little quantity of sand is the sins of my brother, and they are before my face, and in them I exercise myself in judging my brother." When the Abbot Isaac had once judged a certain person, an angel stood before him and said, "God has sent me to ask you whither I am to cast that brother whom you have judged?" When Isaac heard this, he sought forgiveness. And the angel said, "Arise, God forgives thee, but be

careful for the time to come not to judge any before God judges them."

Or how wilt thou say, &c. With what face canst thou animadvert upon, or correct a slight fault of thy neighbour's, when thou toleratest an enormous offence in thyself?

Thou hypocrite, &c. *See clearly:* Gr. διαβλέψεις ἐκβαλεῖν. As it is impossible that he who has a beam in his own eye could see to pluck out a little mote from his brother's eye, because of the beam filling and darkening his own eye, so in like manner it is barely possible that any one whose mind and reason are clouded by grave sin could see how to correct the very small faults of others. For how canst thou hate the very small developments of those things which in an extreme degree thou perceivest not in thyself?

Give not that which is holy, &c. Christ, according to His custom, proceeds to teach by parables and proverbs. There is here a double proverb, each signifying the same thing. And both are rightly connected with what precedes. He had just shown who and what manner of persons they ought to be who correct others. Now He teaches who ought to be corrected and taught, and who not. *Pearls*, therefore, and *that which is holy*, here signify the same thing, namely the precious and heavenly doctrine of the Gospel, of faith and truth, and, by consequence, the holy sacraments. Moreover, the same persons are denoted by dogs and swine, viz., those who are perverse and obstinate. These, on account of their impurity, are like pigs, and on account of their rebellious barking, like dogs. He adds the reason, because they, like hungry swine, stolid and impudent, despise and trample on holy doctrines which are the food of the soul, because they are contrary to their appetite and uncleanness. In the next place they are bitter against the setter forth of the holy doctrine, and tear him either by words, or deeds.

These words of Christ must be taken *per se*, because, *per accidens*, Christ the Lord, S. Stephen, S. Paul, and others, preached the Gospel to the perverse and obstinate Jews, although they knew that they would be slain by them for so doing. For this they did that

they might give public testimony to the truth and glory of God, and for the profit of those who were standing by. For in this way holy things are not presented to swine, but to God and His elect. Thus S. Augustine, who by *dogs* understands opposers of the truth, and by *swine* despisers of it. But by *dogs* S. Chrysostom understands the Gentiles, as most impure; by *swine*, heretics, as addicted to the belly. By *that which is holy*, he understands Baptism and the Eucharist, which must not be given to impure and unworthy persons; *pearls* are the mysteries of the truth, inclosed in the Divine words as in the depths of the sea, *i.e.*, in the profundity of Holy Scripture.

Ask and it shall be given, &c. He returns to the subject of prayer, of which He had begun to treat, vi. 5. *Ask*, viz., from God, by prayer, those things about which I have been teaching, such as are necessary for you, but arduous and difficult, and especially the things which I have laid down to be looked for in the Lord's Prayer. For to it Luke refers these words (xi. 9). Observe, these three words, *ask*, *seek*, *knock*, mean the same thing, that is, earnest prayer. To *ask* signifies confidence in prayer as a prime requisite; to *seek* signifies zeal and diligence, for he who seeks for anything, applies the whole vigour of his mind to obtain what he seeks. To *knock* means perseverance.

Christ then signifies that we must pray faithfully, diligently, ardently, and perseveringly. So S. Augustine, who says that *ask* refers to praying for strength, by which we may be able to fulfil the commandments of God: *seek*, that we may find the truth: *knock*, that heaven may be opened unto us.

To this we may add the words of S. Chrysostom. "*Ask*," he says, "in supplications, praying night and day: *seek* by zeal and labours, for heaven is not given to the slothful: *knock* in prayers, in fastings, and almsgiving, for he who knocks at a door knocks with his hand."

Again, these three words denote increasing earnestness in prayer. When anything is asked for, it is first spoken for; by-and-by, if no answer be given, we cry out; if calling out do

not suffice, we seek for some other means of gaining attention, we apply our mouth to some chink in the door by which our voices may be made to reach the master of the house: if that too fail, we beat at the door, until we gain a hearing. Hence Remigius thus expounds, "We *ask* by praying; we *seek* by living well; we *knock* by persevering." Others, "*Ask* by faith, *seek* by hope, *knock* by charity." Lastly, Climacus (*Gradu* 28) says, *Ask* by striving, *seek* by obedience, *knock* by long-suffering.

Mystically, S. Bernard (*in Scala Claustralium*): "*Seek* by reading, and ye shall find in meditation: *knock* in prayer, and it shall be opened to you in contemplation. Reading offers solid food to the mouth, meditation masticates it, reason gives it flavour, contemplation is the very sweetness itself which pleases and refreshes." He then defines these four processes. "Meditation is a studious action of the mind, which under the guidance of right reason searches out the knowledge of hidden truth: contemplation is the elevation of a mind depending upon God, and tasting the joys of eternal sweetness. Reading searches, meditation finds, contemplation feeds, prayer asks."

For every one that asketh receiveth, &c. Elegantly and truly says S. Augustine, or whoever was the author of *lib. de Salutar. Monitis*, (c. 28), "The prayer of the righteous is the key of heaven. Prayer ascends, God's mercy descends." The same S. Augustine (*lib. senten. apud Prospr. Sent.* 87), says, "The physician knows best what is good for the sick man. Therefore God sometimes in mercy hears not." Again he says (*ad Paulinum, Epist.* 43), "The Lord often denies what we wish for, that he may give us what we would rather, in the end." And the *Gloss* says, "God does not deny Himself to those who ask, for He voluntarily offered Himself to those who asked not for him. And those who seek shall find Him: for He gave Himself to those who sought Him not, that He might be found of them: and He will open to those who knock, for He it is who crieth out, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock.'"

Or what man is there of you, &c. The force of the *or* in this verse

is, that God is more liberal than man. It, as it were, compares God and man, and shows the superiority of God to man.

Or if he ask a fish, &c. For a serpent has the appearance and form of a fish, so that it might be deceitfully substituted for a fish, though only by an enemy, not by a father. He says the same thing that He said in the previous verse, but by a still more striking similitude. For if a father gave a stone to a child who asked him for bread, he would only give him a useless and uneatable thing; but if he gave him a serpent when he asked for a fish, he would give him not only a useless but a noxious and poisonous thing. Thus Christ speaks of what is a moral impossibility.

If ye then being evil, &c. *Being evil: i.e.* "by the natural propensity to evil, which ye have contracted in your nature by sin." So S. Jerome. "Also by your own will and actions." Whence it is plain that these words were spoken to the people generally, not to the Apostles. For the Apostles were good, but among the multitude there were many who were evil and entangled in vices. S. Chrysostom was of another opinion: "In comparison with God," he says, "all appear evil, even the good, as in comparison with the sun all things, even such as are light, appear dark."

Give good things. Luke has, *will give the good Spirit*. For all good things are given by the grace of the Holy Spirit, says Remigius. By *good things* understand true and solid goods which lead to blessedness. Whence S. Augustine says, "Gold and silver are good, not because they make thee good, but because thou mayest do good with them."

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would, &c. The word *therefore*, some are of opinion, has not here any inferential meaning, but is only an enclitic particle, denoting the conclusion of this part of our Lord's Sermon. Hence the Syriac omits it. On the other hand we may, with S. Chrysostom, take the *therefore* as inferential, and then the meaning would be this: "What I have hitherto said at large concerning love of your neighbour

and giving of alms, all these things arise out of this primary natural precept, and first principle of moral philosophy, and rest upon equity, that what thou wishest to be done to thyself, that thou shouldst do to others, and what thou dost not wish to suffer from others, that thou shouldst not do unto others." Understand that *wishest* and *wishest not*, must be taken in a good sense, as guided by right reason. For the man who wishes wine to be given him that he may get drunk may not lawfully offer it to others for such a purpose. Christ here alludes to the monition which Tobit, when he was dying, gave to his son (iv. 16): "That which thou wouldst hate to be done unto thyself, take heed that at no time thou doest it to another."

Enter ye in at the strait gate, &c. *The strait gate*, by which there is an entrance into heaven, to blessedness and the feast of celestial glory, is, says S. Augustine, the Law of God, which straitens and represses our desires: it is also obedience, continence, mortification, the daily cross, which the law bids either to be made or to be carried. The *broad gate* which leads to perdition is concupiscence, too great liberty, gluttony, lust, &c. Christ has here regard to His own sanctions and explanations of the Law, as, *Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire*, and, *If any one shall smite thee on thy right cheek, offer him the other also*, &c. For all these things are arduous and strait, or narrow. It is as though He had said, "I may seem to you to have made narrow the way of salvation by my precepts, but know ye, that it is strait even in itself, and therefore I have not straitened it, but have only described it as it really is; for the way to celestial glory is purity and sanctity, which in this corrupt state of your nature consist in a strict bridling and mortification of your passions." By liberty and indulgence Adam fell into sin, and we all through him, and then into all concupiscence. Thus the remedy for these things is nothing else but strict self-restraint, the cross, and mortification; for contraries are cured by contraries. S. Ambrose says, on the first Psalm. "There are two ways, one of the just, the other of the unjust: one of equity, the other of iniquity. The

way of the just is narrow, that of the unjust is broad. The narrow road is that of soberness, the broad of drunkenness, that it may receive those who are tossing about." Clemens Alexandrinus (*Strom.* lib. 4) cites with praise the words of Hesiod: "Intense labour is placed before virtue, the way to it is long and steep." Also that of Simonides, "Virtue is said to dwell on rocks difficult of access." And so S. Basil says on the first Psalm: "That broad and easy road which goeth downward hath the deceiving evil demon who draws those who follow him by indulgences to perdition. But a good angel presides over the rough, and steep, and difficult way, which leads by means of zealous toils those who pursue it to a blessed end." Wherefore S. Luke has (xiii. 24), *Strive to enter in at the strait gate*, where for *strive*, the Greek has ἀγωνίζεσθε, *i.e.* agonize, contend as it were in a contest and an agony, exercise your utmost power and might as in a wrestling match, as if for life itself, if ye conquer; but for death, if ye be overcome; according to the words of the Apostle, "Every one that striveth for the mastery (*in agone*, Gr. and Vulg.) is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible." We then enter upon a contest, and in it we strive and agonize for heaven or for hell, for a most blessed or a most miserable eternity. And let each see in how great a match he wrestles: for the course and the way to life is the Cross; the course and the way to perdition is indulgence: it is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. The way to life is continence, poverty of spirit and humility. Wherefore S. Barlaam said to king Josaphat, that the way to life is martyrdom, either of blood or of will and penitence: this is the way in which Christ has gone before us: and for this cause the first Christians and those who followed Him willingly met martyrdom, and when persecution had ceased, those who came after inflicted upon themselves the voluntary martrydom of an austere life in monasteries, deserts, and caves.

So also S. Perpetua saw in her dream a golden ladder, but hedged about with knives and swords. By this ladder she had to

climb to heaven, and by this dream she knew that martyrdom was foretold to herself and her companions.

So also S. William, who, from Duke of Aquitaine, became a peninent hermit, gathered from these words of Christ, that all superfluities ought to be cut off, and the body only indulged in things necessary. "How many brethren," said he, "have served the Lord these many years in Egypt without eating fish? For how many tyrants, now in hell, would Jerome's sack, Benedict's frock, Arsenius' tears, Elisha's cowl, have sufficed to keep them out of hell? But woe to us, miserable, who changed superfluity into necessity."

Pythagoras saw the same thing in a shadow. He said that at first the path of virtue is narrow and confined, but afterwards it becomes wider by degrees: but the way of pleasure on the other hand is wide at the beginning, but afterwards it becomes more and more straitened. For as the Apostle says, "Tribulation and anguish is upon every soul of man that worketh evil, but glory, honour and peace to every one that doeth good." (Rom. ii.) For charity and the grace of Christ enlarge the heart, so that the believer may say confidently with the Psalmist, "I will run the way of Thy commandments when Thou hast enlarged my heart" (*dilatasti*, Vulg.).

For strait is the gate, &c. This is the voice of Eternal Wisdom: He then who is wise, and will set himself in earnest to save his soul, let him take the narrow way.

The measure of this straitness and narrowness of the way to heaven, and the fewness of those who find it, and are saved, you may gather from the types. First there is Lot, who only with his two daughters escaped from the burning of Sodom and the other cities of the plain, when all the rest were burnt up because of their lusts. For the world is like Sodom, it is inflamed with lusts and passions. Wherefore the greater part of the lost are damned on account of pollutions and lusts. The second type is the deluge. From this Noah only, with seven souls, escaped. The deluge swallowed up all the rest on account of their sins.

In the world is a deluge of iniquity, and thus of punishments and all calamities. The third was the entrance into the Promised Land, which was a type of heaven. Into this of six hundred thousand Israelites, there entered but two, Caleb and Joshua. All this is taught too by the infallible words of Christ, "Many are called, but few chosen." Wisely does Cassian advise, "Live with the poor that thou mayest deserve to be found and saved amongst the few."

This moreover is true if you consider the mass of mankind. For by far the greater portion of men are Infidels, Turks, Saracens, or heretics. S. Augustine (lib. 4 *contr. Crescent.* c. 53) compares the Church to a threshing-floor in which there is far more chaff than grains of wheat, more bad than good, more who will be damned than will be saved. Yet others, with greater mildness, think it probable that the greater portion of professing Christians will be saved, because most of them receive the Holy Sacraments before they die. And they justify sinners, not only those who have contrition, but who have attrition. But this seems to be true of those who have not lived in constant and habitual sins, such as fornication, usury, hatred. For such, when they are sick, conceive with difficulty any serious and efficacious purpose of amendment, or if they do conceive it, God in just punishment of their past sins suffers the demon of their bygone lusts to tempt them, and he furbishes and sharpens their memory, and so the sick man in consequence of his habits easily yields, and consents in his heart to sin, and thus he falls and is damned. Of this there are many examples.

Beware of false prophets, &c. Christ passes on to a most salutary admonition concerning the taking heed of false teachers, who teach that the way to heaven is not strait, but easy, and who thus send those who follow them not to heaven but to hell. They teach that we need not fast, nor go to confession, nor preserve virginity, nor religious vows; they allow all sorts of liberty to the flesh, and take away all merit from good works.

Observe, a prophet in Scripture means not only one who foretells future events, but many other persons, such as holy and religious men, singers, workers of miracles, and here as in many other places, a doctor or teacher. For the prophets were teachers, who made known the way of life, and of understanding things which were not plain to others, whether he foretold future events or not. For in Hebrew a prophet is called a seer, because he sees secret and hidden things, especially such things as future events. False prophets therefore are false teachers, whether they be heretics, or Gentiles and Pagans.

Now the sheep's clothing which these wolves put on are to veil their errors and heresies, first under the plea of liberty of conscience; 2. By quoting texts of Scripture that serve to favour their heresies; 3. The pretext of reforming the morals of the Church, especially those of the clergy and ecclesiastics; 4. By the simulation of meekness, simplicity, and piety; 5. By soft speeches, and a garrulous eloquence by which they cover their wolfish ferocity.

Which come, in truth, from themselves, neither called nor sent, nor approved by the bishops and prelates of the Church. Concerning these it is said (Jer. xxiii. 21), "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran."

By their fruits, &c. *Do men gather?* As grapes are not wont to be produced by or gathered off thorns, nor figs off thistles, so in like manner, no good or sweet fruit can be collected from heresy or heretics, but only harsh and thorny fruit. This fruit is of two kinds—1. Of false doctrine; 2. Of bad morals and wickedness. Luther and Calvin have given examples in this age. For Luther teaches that vows are not binding upon the religious: that man does not possess free will, that he is the slave of necessity, that he must sin: that faith alone justifies: that good works have no merit before God. Calvin teaches that God is the author of evils: that Christ despaired on the Cross, that He felt the pains of hell, &c.; which things are downright blasphemy, and contrary to the natural law and to reason. Calvin also maintained that the

Faith, by which he meant his own perversion of it, should be defended and propagated by force of arms, even by the slaughter of lawful princes and kings, of bishops, priests, and Catholics who opposed it. Whence we have heard of, and almost seen with our eyes in England, France, and Germany, so many murders, robberies, banishments of priests and Catholics, and a vast deluge of iniquity, and as it were a universal conflagration of goodness. We have seen the Blessed Sacraments profaned, the Holy Sacrifice abolished, vows broken, the saints contemned, churches burnt, the sacred canons set at nought, virgins violated, and all such like. For, as John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, who, with Thomas More, was a glorious martyr in England under Henry VIII., truly says, "Lust is at once the mother and the child of heresy."

So every good tree, &c. "For a good tree is not distinguished from an evil one by its leaves or flowers," says S. Bernard (*Epist.* 107), but by its fruit.

Observe, 1. By *good tree* in this place, we are not to understand a good will, or charity, and by a corrupt tree an evil will, as S. Augustine, Chrysostom, and others think, but a good or bad teacher, for about these the words immediately preceding are spoken.

Note, 2. By *the fruit of the tree, i.e., of a doctor*, must be understood his doctrine, which comes forth true from a true teacher, false from a false one.

A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, &c. "A thorn tree cannot produce grapes, nor thistles figs, but a thorn must produce thorns, and a thistle thistles, as I have said; and *vice versa*, a vine cannot produce thorns, but grapes; and although the grapes and the figs should not ripen, but remain sour, that does not arise from the fault of the vine, or the fig-tree, but from unseasonable weather, and deficiency of the sun's heat. In like manner a prophet, that is, a true teacher, cannot teach false doctrine, nor can a false teacher teach the truth, or act altogether rightly and holily. You must take this in a composite and formal sense, so

far, that is, as the teacher is good or bad; because in a concrete and material sense, the good doctor may fall away from his goodness, and teach or do wicked things. The Scribes taught right, but their deeds were evil. The converse also of this is sometimes true.

Many heretics have wrested this sentence of Christ, applying it falsely for the establishing their own heresies. For first, the Manichæans endeavoured to prove from it that some men are by nature good and others evil; or that there are two natural Principles, one good, which makes some men good; the other evil, which makes some men bad. 2. Jovinian maintained from these words that a man who is born of God is not able to commit sin. (See S. Jerome, *contra Jovinian.*) 3. The Pelagians inferred from it that there is no original sin, because from a good marriage as from a good tree, such an evil fruit as sin cannot be produced. *Teste* S. Augustine (*lib. de Nupt. et Concup.* c. 26). 4. The Donatists gathered from it that wicked priests, as bad trees, cannot properly baptize. 5. The Calvinists argue from it that there is no free will in man to bring forth good works, or bad. The same infer from it that we are not justified by good works, but only declared righteous, since a tree is not made good by its good fruits, but is manifested by them to be good. But all these things are falsely inferred. They have none of them anything to do with the passage. For Christ properly applies this maxim only to prophets, that is to true or false teachers, as I have said.

Not every one that saith unto me, &c. Behold here Christ clearly describes the fruit of a good tree, *i.e.*, of a good doctor and Christian that verily it is to do the will of our Heavenly Father, that in truth thou shouldst not only believe in Him and in His law as set forth by Christ, but that thou shouldst in deed, and in all things, fulfil the same. So says S. Augustine (lib. 2 *de Serm. in Mont.*). Therefore Christ says, *Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord:* that is, not every one who believeth in Me as Lord and God, or invokes Me as such, or who often has My name on his lips, in attestation of his words and his doctrine, as though he

were preaching the pure Gospel, as the heretics boast—such a one, I say, shall not enter into the Palace and Kingdom of Heaven's Father, but he who, shall do that Father's will, that is, who shall fulfil His Commandments. And these are two. 1. To believe in Christ, with an orthodox faith, and 2, to perform in act and deed the commands of Christ. For "duties in words obtain not the kingdom of Heaven." "We must do some thing and offer some thing that is our own to obtain a blissful eternity," says S. Hilary. And "the road to the kingdom of heaven is obedience, not the speaking of a name," says the *Gloss.*

Many shall say unto me in that day—the Day of Judgment. For that shall be the last and greatest Day of the world. That Day shall be the gate of eternity, and shall send those who have done good works to a blessed, and those who have done evil works to a miserable eternity. "Then," as S. Chrysostom says, "the works of each shall speak, while their tongues keep silence, nor shall one intercede for another."

Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied, &c. Have we not foretold future events by Thy light and grace? So Maldonatus. Or otherwise, Have we not by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by Thy commission and authority taught and preached the true faith? So Jansen.

And done many wonderful works. He calls *wonderful works,* or *miracles, virtues,* as it is in the Greek and Vulgate. And those real miracles. For it is plain from this verse that God does sometimes work miracles even by false prophets, as He did by Judas the traitor (Luke x. 17, &c.) and Caiaphas (John xi. 49.) And Balaam the soothsayer (Numb. xxiv. 3). S. Jerome says, "To work miracles is sometimes not because of his goodness who works them: but it is the invocation of the name of Christ which performs them for the good of others." Whence S. Gregory collects (lib. 20, *Moral.* 8): "The proof of sanctity is not the performance of miracles, but to love one's neighbour as oneself, and to think of God what is true, and to think better of one's neighbour than of oneself."

Observe, although impious and false teachers may, by the gift of God, prophesy and work miracles, yet they cannot do this for the confirmation of false doctrine. For a miracle, even a solitary one, so long as it is real and plain, is not only a probable, but a morally certain proof of true doctrine, whence Christ and the Apostles use it as an inviolable argument for proving the Christian faith. Nor do we ever read of a miracle being wrought in confirmation of heresy or error. And *à priori* reasoning shows this. For a miracle is a singular and supernatural operation of God alone, by which, as by His own seal, God attests the right faith and truth; wherefore if God should hearken to a false teacher calling upon Him to confirm his error by a miracle, He would seem to co-operate with him, and attest his error, and by consequence, lie and deceive, which is impossible. For God is the Prime Verity, and the Truth itself, and He has reserved the power of working miracles to Himself alone, that by them, as a testimony peculiar to Himself, He may seal His own Word and His own Truth, and testify that they emanate from Him. A miracle therefore is as it were the Voice of God working and attesting that He does speak; and He confirms His words by it as by a seal. For other things are common to God, with angels, and devils. Wherefore in them it is doubtful whether God, or an angel, or the devil speaks and works. So D. Thomas (*2a. 2æ. quæst.* 178, *art.* 2) and theologians *passim*. And S. Augustine (*lib. contra Epist. Fundamenti*, c. 4) declares that he was held in the Church by the chains of miracles. And Richard de S. Victor says, (lib. 1 *de Trinit.* c. 2), "O Lord, if it be error which we believe, we have been deceived by Thee. For our faith has been confirmed among us by such signs and wonders as could not have been wrought unless they were done by Thee." (See also Bellarmine, lib. 4, *On the notes of the Church*, c. 14.)

Let us observe, however, here, that if the gift of miracles has been given to any one by God for any reason, as an abiding habit, or condition, such a one may afterwards abuse the gift, and work the miracle for an evil end, such, for example, as vain glory, gain, or

the confirmation of what is false. For in such a case God concurs indeed with the miracle itself but not with the abuse of it, or with the evil object of him who works it. For this He only permits. Thus God concurs with an impious priest in the consecration of the Eucharist, even though the priest intends to abuse it for the purposes of sorcery, or blasphemy, yea even to sell it to a Jew to mock at and pierce it. And understand this, that I have said as to a wicked man abusing the gift of miracles, upon the principle, that any grace given by God for one end may be abused by evil men for another end. For it is plain that the power of consecration is given by God to a priest for one end, although he may abuse his power for another end. Still it appertains to the providence of God not to allow an impious man to abuse the grace of miracles to deceive others so as to lead them into heresy, if this misuse should be entirely hidden from them. For then men, without any fault of their own, and on the authority, as it would appear, of God's attestation would be led into error, which is impossible. Neither could God correct or amend their error by another miracle. For men would say that if the first miracle were wrought for the confirmation of what is false, by parity of reasoning, the second also might be wrought for the confirmation of what is false: so that God would, as it were, disarm Himself, and deprive Himself of the power of declaring and attesting the truth, and confuting error. For this consists in the working of miracles. In the case of those whom the common people call *Saviours*, even when they are of evil life, it is plain, says Navarrus in his *Manuale*, that the gift of curing diseases has been given them by God for the common good of the Church, and that they can abuse this gift for evil purposes. So also in Flanders, they say that those who are born on Good Friday, and also a seventh son, sprung in continual descent from a seventh son, are able to cure the King's Evil by touching it. But the gift is given by God to the former in honour of Good Friday, and the mystery of Christ's Death and Passion, and to the latter in honour of wedlock, to show that it has been honoured and instituted by God, and raised

by Christ to the dignity of a Sacrament. Wherefore if any should use this power for evil, we can see that it is the man who is abusing his gift, not God who is co-operating with him for evil. Thus it is said that the same power of curing the King's Evil has been given to the kings of England and France, on account of the merits of King Edward the Confessor. Indeed, one Tucker, a Protestant, wrote a Book about the persons cured of the King's Evil, by Elizabeth, late Queen of England. But he is completely confuted by Delrio, *in Magicis* (lib. 1, c. 3, 9. 4).

At any rate up to the present time there is no case on record in which it can be shown that any one who had even the habitual gift, has wrought a miracle for the confirmation of heresy, or false doctrine, unless we choose to allow that Calvin, pretending in confirmation of his heresy to raise a supposed dead man to life, who was really alive, God, to punish the deceit, caused the man to die. But all such miracles, as it were indications of perfidy, condemn heresy and confirm the true faith.

Ver. 23.—*And then will I confess unto them*, &c. "I Christ, will say unto the false prophets, who have taught and done miracles in My Name, in the Judgment Day, I knew you indeed as My prophets, who did miracles in My Name: but as My friends and sons whom I predestinated to the inheritance of My glory, I know you not. That is, I do not love and delight in you, because the will and law of My Heavenly Father, which ye taught unto others with your mouths, ye have not fulfilled in your deeds. Go ye therefore into everlasting fire, because ye have wrought iniquity." So says S. Augustine; and S. Gregory says, "Christ deserts them as unknown whom He did not know for the merit of their lives." (*Hom.* 12 *in Evangel.*) This knowledge therefore of God is not speculative, but practical, loving, and affectionate: as we are said to know those whom we love, and not to know those whom we dislike.

Ver. 24.—*Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine*, &c. This is the Epilogue by which Christ concludes His lengthy Sermon on the Mount. It is as though He said—"Thus far have

I taught you how ye ought to live wisely and holily according to the will and law of God, if ye wish to arrive at the kingdom of God and everlasting happiness. For this is the direct way to them, and other way there is none. Wherefore if ye do those things which I have taught you, ye *shall be like a prudent man who built his house upon the rock.* For it will resist all winds and storms which rush against it."

Christ here alludes to Prov. x. 25, "As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more; but the righteous is an everlasting foundation." And ix. 1: "Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars."

Observe, the spiritual house of the soul is the perfection of virtues, for as a material house is builded with much labour, and rises by degrees with various stones and beams, so is the spiritual house built up by various virtues and holy operations, and by long labour and slow degrees. The length of the house is long-suffering, its breadth is charity, its height, hope. The four walls are the four cardinal virtues, viz., Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance. The pavement is humility; the roof, patience. The window is the desire of heavenly glory, through which the light of the Gospel finds an entrance. The door is obedience to the Commandments. The doorkeeper is holy fear. The watchmen are holy angels. The tower is contemplation. The mind or intellect is the master of the house. The husband is the will, the children are good works. The servants are the senses obedient to the mind. The table is Holy Scriptures, the bread is the Eucharist, the wine is the Blood of Christ, the living water is the Holy Ghost. The oil is mercy. The bed is a quiet and peaceable mind. The sacraments are medicine, priests are the physicians. The Guests are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. See S. Bernard (*Tract. de interiori Domo*).

Lastly, note here, as against the innovators, that faith, without the good works which faith prescribes to be done, will not suffice for salvation. For Christ here calls a foundation of sand faith alone conceived by hearing preaching, for this faith is like sand, dry and

worthless: but the rock He calls faith solidified by good works. Note 2, the order which Christ employs. For 1, in verse 15, He taught the necessity of a right faith and true teachers; 2, in verse 21 *et seq.*, the necessity of good works and a holy life. Mystically the Rock is Christ, whence the *Gloss*, "He builds on Christ who does what he hears of Him."

And the rain descended, &c. The Arabic has, *for its foundations were made firm upon the rock.* The rain, wind, and rivers are all temptations and adversities whatsoever, whether coming from the world, the flesh, or the devil. They also mean the condemnation which Christ shall pronounce upon the wicked in the Day of Judgment. For this is often expressed in Scripture by the words *storm* and *tempest*, as in Isaiah xxviii. 2, "Behold the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand."

He then that is faithful to Christ and His law, being as it were founded by fear and love upon a most firm rock, cares not for the blasts of persecution, nor the gales of adulation, nor the zephyrs of flattery, nor the north winds of threats, nor the tempest of blows, but in his vocation and ministry stands unshaken in God. Thus like a crag or a rock, which on every side is beaten by the waves of the sea, so he continues unmoved and unsubdued. We have an example in S. Peter, who being set firm upon a rock, that is, the love of Christ, overcame all adverse things. Wherefore when he was commanded by the chiefs of the Sadducees Acts iv. 18) to cease from preaching Christ, he answered, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

S. Gregory Nazianzen (*Orat.* 28) thus depicts the Christian philosopher: "There is a certain fabulous tree, which the more it is cut, the more it flourishes, and rises superior to the knife, which lives by death, and is propagated by cutting, and grows by being consumed." This, says the Scholiast, is not a fabulous, but a real tree. It is fulfilled in the vine, which, the more it is pruned, the more it sprouts and bears fruit. Nazianzen proceeds, "Thus

of a truth is the philosopher. He flourishes amid torments; and he deems the troubles of life to be the harvest of virtue, and glories in adversity." And he concludes by showing that there are three things which are invincible—namely, God, an angel, and a philosopher. Two of these cannot be severed, or plucked asunder, God and an angel. The third is a philosopher; in matter devoid of matter, uncircumscribed by the body, heavenly while on earth, impassible amid sufferings, easily giving himself to be overcome by all things, except that through greatness of mind, in that wherein he suffers himself to be overcome, he overcomes those who seem to have overcome him.

Ver. 26.—*And whoso heareth these sayings of mine,* &c. Rightly is the instability and disobedience of him who heareth the words of Christ and doeth them not likened unto sand. For, 1. Sand is soft and shifting, so that it cannot afford a solid and durable foundation. 2. Sand is dry; and so the unstable mind which doeth not that which it heareth is dry and empty of virtue and the moisture of the Divine Spirit. 3. Sand is blown about by the wind and dispersed into all quarters; so too a light and inconstant mind is carried into every sort of concupiscence by every breath of desire and temptation. 4. As sand is very fine and composed of millions of little grains, so the unstable heart is filled with a thousand cogitations and desires after vain and trifling things.

Tropologically, the foolish and worldly person builds upon sand, *i.e.*, says Salmeron, upon creatures, who like sand are barren for good, and in a state of fluidity, so as to fall away into sin, and shaken by the waves because they are agitated by labours and temptations. For as sand is dry, or bibulous and insatiable, so creatures cannot satisfy the soul of man. Sand is also very numerous; so likewise the wicked are innumerable, and "infinite is the company of fools." Sand therefore denotes all the people of the devil—sterile, and by no means united, whereas the people of God are strong and united like a rock. For though many be called, few are chosen.

And the rain descended, &c. Rain denotes the temptation of the

world; rivers, of the flesh; the winds, of the devil. For rain coming down from on high, and causing the earth to swell and making it fruitful, denotes ambition of honours and the desire of wealth, which the world offers to the vain and inconstant man, whereby he is made to depart from the law of God, and fall away from the faith. Rivers, or floods which arise out of the earth, denote the temptations of the flesh, as gluttony and lust, which have their origin in the flesh itself, so to say. Winds, which from the atmosphere blow against the house laterally and invisibly, denote the temptations of the devil, who is an invisible spirit, and the prince of the power of the air. For he insinuates, and as it were blows into our fancy a thousand depraved thoughts and desires, and they are so subtil that sometimes thou knowest not whether they come from an angel, or the devil. For Satan transforms himself into an angel of light.

Ver. 28.—*And it came to pass*, &c. Here then is concluded Christ's whole Sermon upon the Mount, containing the whole law and perfection of the Gospel. And although the precepts given are dispersed, yet are they all connected. And if any one desires to learn the order and connection which exists amongst them let him read Bellarmine (lib. 4, *de Justific.*)

For he taught them, &c. That is, *He was accustomed to teach*, &c. 1. Because Christ taught important matters with great authority, matters of the highest moment for salvation, and the Truth itself. But the Scribes taught with levity, trifling matters, such as rites and ceremonies, washings of the hands and of cups.

2. Because what Christ taught in word, that He fulfilled in deed. For great authority is added to the doctrine of the teacher when he performs the good which he enjoins. "Protracted," says Seneca, "is the road to virtue through precepts; short and effectual through example." Here S. Gregory (23 *Moral.* 7): "That is indeed taught with authority which is acted before it is spoken. For we take away from confidence in our doctrine when conscience impedes the tongue. Whence also it is written of the Lord, 'He taught as one having authority, and not as the Scribes.'

For peculiarly and above all He spoke only from a good power, because He had done no evil through weakness. From the power of His Divinity He had that which He ministered unto us through the innocence of His humility.

3. Christ taught with great spirit and fervour, with great persuasive force and efficacy; the Scribes coldly and superficially.

4. Christ confirmed His doctrine by miracles, which the Scribes could not do. Again Christ had a marvellous grace in speaking, according to those words of S. Matthew, "They wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth."

5. The Scribes taught as interpreters of the Law, but Christ as a Lawgiver sent from heaven, with celestial wisdom and majesty. So Bede and Theophylact.

6. Christ in His teaching aimed only at the glory of God and the salvation of man. The Scribes sought their own glory and the applause of men.

7. Christ by His external teaching, and by His holy interior inspiration, and the light of grace, illuminated the minds and inflamed the affections of His hearers, and thereby made ignorant and stupid men learned, and those who were torpid and frigid fervent.

In these things then let the orator and preacher imitate Christ, and let him teach more by his life than his words, like S. Basil, of whom S. Gregory Nazianzen writes (*Orat.* 20), "A sermon of Basil's was like thunder, because his life was like lightning." S. Bernard, in his Life of S. Malachi, says that upon one occasion he rendered a certain enraged and furious woman, whose temper was perfectly intolerable to every one, so meek, that she did not even appear angry. And this he did by a word, saying to her, 'In the name of the Lord Jesus, I bid thee be no longer angry." And this, S. Bernard thinks, was a greater miracle than raising a man from the dead, which was once performed by the same S. Malachi. "For in the one case it was but the outward man who lived again, in the other case it was the inward man."

CHAPTER VIII.

2 *Christ cleanseth the leper,* 5 *healeth the centurion's servant,* 14 *Peter's mother in law,* 16 *and many other diseased:* 18 *sheweth how he is to be followed:* 23 *stilleth the tempest on the sea,* 28 *driveth the devils out of two men possessed,* 31 *and suffereth them to go into the swine.*

WHEN he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.

2 And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

3 And Jesus put forth *his* hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

4 And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

5 And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,

6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this *man*, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth *it*.

10 When Jesus heard *it*, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, *so* be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self-same hour.

14 And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.

15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.

16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with *his* word, and healed all that were sick:

17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare *our* sicknesses.

18 Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side.

19 And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

20 And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes and the birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.

21 And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

22 But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

23 And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.

24 And behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep.

25 And his disciples came to *him*, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.

26 And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

27 But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?

28 And when he was come to the other side, into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.

29 And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

30 And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding.

31 So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.

32 And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters:

33 And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils.

34 And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought *him* that he would depart out of their coasts.

Ver. 2.—*And, behold, a leper*, &c. This same miracle is related by S. Mark (i. 40), and by Luke (v. 12). From a comparison of these

it would seem to follow that the miracle was not performed immediately upon our Lord's descent, at the very foot of the mountain, for Luke says that *it came to pass in one of the cities*. And both Mark and Luke speak of other miracles as previously performed. But S. Matthew's narrative appears to be the most chronological, according to which it may be said that this miracle was the first which Christ wrought after His descent. So S. Jerome, Jansen, and others. As to what S. Luke says, that, *it took place in one of the cities*, we must understand, *near the city*. For by the law lepers were ordered to be kept entirely apart, and were forbidden to enter towns and camps, lest the inhabitants should catch the disease. Some think that the Levitical law only forbade lepers living in towns, but not their passing through them, so that this leper might have been cleansed by Christ as he was passing through this city. This city, as may be gathered from the fifth verse, was Capernaum.

How great, how incurable and contagious, a disease was leprosy is plain from hence, that lepers, both by the ancient law and the usage of all nations, were debarred from consorting with their fellow men. For in lepers there is a contagion which spreads by contact with the whole, whom they are able to infect by the stench of their ulcers and their fetid breath. With them, by the contagion and the infection of the disease, the face is disfigured, the hair falls off, the nostrils are enlarged, the bones are eaten away, and the tongue swells, in short, every kind of disease, and all their symptoms, are found as the accompaniment of leprosy. Physicans teach that it may be considered an elephantine disease, and incurable. How, says Avicenna, can leprosy be cured, since it is an universal cancer, when even a single cancer is beyond the power of medicine? Moreover, hot and stony and salt regions, and such as are exposed to excessive vicissitudes of cold and heat, are peculiarly liable to this disease. Such regions were Palestine and a part of Egypt. Wherefore Galen says, "In Alexandria many labour under elephantia (leprosy) as well on account of their way of living as of the heat."

Worshipped, i.e., falling down upon his knees and face, for S. Mark adds γονυπετῶν, *i.e.*, falling at his knees. The leper did this not with the design of rendering Him civil honour, but that he might give to Christ the highest worship of religion, as is plain from his so humble and believing petition. For he did not request Christ to ask God, as Moses did, but *If Thou art willing, Thou art able to make me clean.* As though he had said, I know that Thou hast the power of God, and therefore dominion over diseases, so that Thou canst control leprosy by the right of a master, and canst, by Thy command alone, drive it from me. I ask Thee, therefore, that thou wouldst deign to do this. For if Thou wilt, the thing is done, and I am healed. So S. Chrysostom says, "To the spiritual physician, he offers spiritual hire—viz., believing prayer, than which nothing of more worth can be offered to God." Also the *Interlinear Gloss* says, "To will He adds the attribute of power, for as great as His will so great is the power of God. For whatsoever He wills, that He is forthwith able to perform. According to the words of the Psalmist, "Whatsover the Lord willed, that did he in heaven and earth." (Ps. cxxxv. 6, Vulg.) This leper therefore had faith in the Divinity of Christ, partly from His inward illumination and inspiration, partly from His miracles, several of which Christ had already performed in this first year of His preaching. For this leper was healed in the second year, as I have said in the *Chronotaxis, nu.* 22. Again, the words, *if Thou wilt*, denote the desire of being healed, mingled with resignation. For he resigns himself to the will of Christ, that if He wishes it, he may be cured; if He be unwilling, he may remain unhealed.

And Jesus put forth his hand, &c. *Touched him*, that He might show that He was above the law, which forbade contact with the leper. The law forbade this touching of a leper from fear of contagion. But there was no danger of such contagion in Christ's case, but rather the certainty of healing the leper. When, therefore, Christ touched the leper, He did not do so as against the law, but rather as fulfilling the spirit of the law.

2. He touched him out of kindness, that He might show His love for the leper.

3. He touched him, says S. Cyril, that the saving efficacy of the Flesh of Christ might be made manifest. Whence Victor of Antioch, on S. Mark (chap. i.), says, "The Word, willing to show forth Its indivisible union with the Flesh, wrought many miracles and signs through the ministry of the body." And Bede says, "God stretched forth His hand, and touched human nature by His Incarnation, and brought back to the Temple those who were cast out of the camp of the people of God (the lepers), that they might offer their bodies a living sacrifice to Himself, to whom it is said, 'Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.'"

I will, be thou clean. From these words the Fathers prove the Divinity of Christ and His omnipotence. Maldonatus cites them at length. Thus S. Ambrose: "He saith, 'I will,' because of Photinus, He commands on account of Arius, He touches on account of Manichæus." For Photinus taught that Christ was a mere man, and not God, whose attribute is an almighty will, by which, he says, "I will, be thou clean." Arius taught that Christ was inferior to the Father, and, therefore, did not Himself command, but received the Father's commandments. Manichæus taught that Christ had not real flesh, but only in appearance, such as could not in reality either touch or be touched.

And immediately, &c. There was no interval between Christ's command and its fulfilment. He spoke and all things were made, because His will was omnipotent. (Genesis i.) The Arabic translates, *the man was cleansed from his leprosy:* for the words, *the leprosy was cleansed*, are a figure of speech. By this miracle Christ shows that He came into the world as a physician that He might heal all diseases and purge away all filthiness.

And Jesus saith unto him. (S. Mark, *threatened, i.e.*, commanded him with a severe and stern countenance.) He did this to avoid ostentation, and to teach us not to boast of our virtues and gifts, but rather conceal them.

But go, show thyself to the priest; Mark has *to the high priest.* "He sends him to the priests," says S. Jerome, "on account of humility, that He may appear to show deference to them, so that they henceforth might either believe and be saved, or else be held without excuse; and, lastly, that He might not be accounted to violate the law.

The gift which was to be offered to the priest by lepers who were cleansed was a lamb, or, if the leper were poor, two turtle doves, or two young pigeons. (Lev. xiv. 13, &c.)

For a testimony unto them, sc. the priests. By the word *testimony,* some understand the law, as though He had said, "Offer the gift enjoined, that thou mayest fulfil the law which Moses commanded." For in the 119th Psalm the law is often called by the name of *testimony.* That is to say, it is the Divine will, which God testifies that He would have done by us. There is, however, no reason why *testimony* should not be taken in its ordinary acceptation.

This then was the testimony which the leper gave to the priests that he was cleansed from his leprosy, namely, an ocular inspection of his body and his limbs, which was made by them. And if they saw that he was healed, they accepted his gift as a thank-offering to God; but if he were not healed they refused it.

Tropologically, leprosy signifies mortal sin, especially that which is contagious, such as heresy is in an especial manner, because of its extreme foulness and infectious nature. So S. Augustine (lib. 2, *Quæst. Evan., quæst.* 40), Theodoret, Radulphus, and others, on Levit. xiv. Hence the cleansing of leprosy is the symbol of the sacrament of penance, and of sacramental confession, whereby sins are forgiven. From this type, S. Jerome on the sixteenth chapter of S. Matthew proves the power and efficacy of this sacrament against the heretics, showing how the priests must be cognisant of the various kinds and varieties of sins. S. Chrysostom (lib. 3, *de Sacerdotio*) does the same, teaching that the office of a Christian priest is far more powerful and excellent than was that of a priest of the order of Aaron, because to these latter it was not granted to heal leprosy, but only to declare that it was healed,

whilst to the former it is given not merely to declare that sins are forgiven, but really to cleanse and absolve them. And this was the reason why, when Christ came down from the mount, where He had taught the Evangelical Law, He willed that His first miracle should be the cleansing of the leper, chiefly because the various stages of leprosy best represent the foulness and plague of sin, and the cleansing of leprosy the forgiveness of sins. And so Christ in His Passion assumed the appearance of a leper, that He might take upon Himself and heal the leprosy of our souls. Wherefore Isaiah says (liii. 4), "Surely He Himself hath borne our sicknesses, and carried our griefs; and we esteemed Him as though He were a leper, stricken of God, and humiliated. But He was wounded for our iniquities; He was bruised for our wickednesses." (Vulg.) See what I have said on leprosy on Lev. xiii. and xiv. This was why Christ appeared to the monk Martyrius in the form of a leper, and suffered Himself to be carried on his shoulders to the gates of his monastery, where He disappeared. Yet did not Martyrius feel His weight, because Christ bore him who carried Him, as S. Gregory says (*Hom.* 30 *in Evang.*). Christ appeared in the same form of a leper to S. Louis, Bishop of Toulouse, who was a grandson of S. Louis, King of France, as is related in his Life.

And when he was come into Capernaum, &c. This was the second miracle by which Christ confirmed His teaching upon the mount, as S. Jerome says. This is the passage from which we gather that the city near to which the leper was healed was Capernaum, as I have already said. Moreover, the leper was a Jew, and the centurion was a Gentile—probably a Roman, a captain of 100 men or more. L. Dexter, in his Chronicle, lately published, says that this centurion was Caius Cornelius, a Spanish centurion, the father of Caius Oppias, also a centurion, who stood beside Christ on the cross, and beheld the signs which were done in heaven, and the sun, and the earth, and the rocks, and was converted to Christ. Both father and son afterwards preached the Gospel in Judæa and Spain.

Came to him. There is an antilogy here; for Luke (vii. 1) relates the same miracle differently. He does not say that the centurion himself came to Christ, but sent to Him, first Jews, then his friends, to ask the favour of Him that He would heal His servant. Wherefore in S. Luke we must supply from S. Matthew, that after his friends, the centurion himself, last of all, came to Christ, either for the sake of doing Him honour, or because of the urgency of the disease, and the imminent peril of death. This is the opinion of S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* 26), Theophylact, and Euthymius. Or you may suppose that the centurion is here said to have come to Christ, and besought and answered Him, not personally, but by his friends. This is the opinion of S. Augustine and Bede.

Heal my servant. Greek, *boy:* for servants were under subjection, and were bound to render obedience and reverence, like sons. Moreover, this servant was dear and precious to the centurion, as Luke says.

Lieth at home sick of the palsy. That was, says S. Hilary, "like a corpse in a bed, with all his limbs useless—unable to stand, or do anything." Paralysis, says Celsus, is an unstringing of the nerves. It is a disease in which half the body is dead, without the power of motion or feeling. And so Galen says (*Comment.* lib. 4). It is called *hemiplexia, i.e.*, semi-apoplexy, because it affects half the body; for when the whole body is similarly affected, it is called *apoplexy.*

Grievously tormented, and so at the point of death, as S. Luke says. For this was sudden and acute paralysis. There are other slow forms of paralysis, which are without this excessive torture and immediate danger. The torment here spoken of seems to have been convulsion and drawing up of the nerves, which have their origin in the brain. For when they are unnaturally twisted and stretched, they cause intense anguish, as William Ader shows, from Galen (*lib. de Ægrotis et Morbis a Christo sanatis*, c. 2), in which work Ader shows that those sick persons were despaired of, and incurable by natural means, and were therefore reserved by God for Christ, as the Arch-physician. Such an one was this

paralytic. S. Ambrose says the same thing (*Epist.* 75), "The Lord Jesus saved those whom no one else was able to cure."

There is, in the account of this miracle, a second antilogy. S. Luke says, *When he heard of Jesus he sent unto him the elders of the Jews*, &c. Luke says, *he asked him to come;* whilst Matthew, and indeed Luke himself, relate what seems a contradiction of this, in his saying, *Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof, but speak the word only.* The explanation is, that the words *asked* and *sent*, so far as they relate to the word *come*, apply to the Jewish ambassadors of the centurion. They had less faith and humility than the centurion, who only asked through them that Christ would heal his servant; but the Jews added of themselves the request that He would come and heal him by touching him. And so, by means of the elders, he asked Jesus to *come*. For what the ambassador saith, that he who sent the ambassador is reckoned to say. Luke, therefore, after his manner, for the sake of brevity, rolls together what was done and said by the Jews and the centurion, without distinguishing or separating one from the other.

Others give a different explanation, namely, that when the centurion sent the Jews, he sent them to ask Christ to come and heal his servant; but after they had gone, being illuminated by God, and his faith and humility having increased, he repented of what he had done, and desired and asked that Christ, without being present, would heal him. But this would be inconsistent with what is said in Luke vii. 7, where the centurion, through the Jews, is reported to have said at the first, *Wherefore also, I thought not myself worthy to come unto thee.* For if he had thought himself worthy that Christ should come unto him, much more would he have thought himself worthy to come unto Christ.

Ver. 8.—*Say in a word only.* Meaning, There is no need that Thou shouldst be present to touch my servant; but though Thou art absent, give the command, and my servant will be immediately healed. The centurion therefore believed that Christ was God who is everywhere present, and commandeth and worketh

whatsoever He will, or at least, that Christ was an extraordinary prophet, and most dear to God—in other words, the Messiah promised to the Jews, who, in God's name in Judæa, ordered all things according to His own will.

For I also am a man under authority, &c. If I have authority over a few soldiers, so that they obey my behests, how much more, O Christ, who hast power over all things, canst Thou make diseases obey Thee? Or, if I, who am placed under the authority of my tribune and of Cæsar, can yet give my orders to the soldiers under me, how much more canst Thou, O Christ, who art under the power of none, but art God omnipotent and Lord of all, do whatsoever Thou wilt? so that even if absent Thou shouldst say to the disease, I mean my servant's palsy, *Go away*, immediately it will depart: if Thou shouldst say, *Come*, straightway it would come. For diseases are, as it were, Thy ministers and satellites, whom Thou at a nod sendest upon the guilty, and whom, when sinners repent and are suppliant, Thou recallest. S. Jerome commends the *faith* of the centurion, who, though he was a Gentile, believed that one who was paralytic could be healed by the Saviour; his humility, in that he deemed himself unworthy that He should come under his roof; his prudence, because he beheld the Divinity lying hid beneath Its corporeal veil, for he knew that not that which was seen, even by unbelievers, could help him, but that which was within, which was unseen.

When Jesus heard, he marvelled. Whence Origen says, "Consider how great a thing, and what sort of thing, that was which the Only-Begotten God marvels at. Gold, riches, kingdoms, principalities in His sight are as shadows, or as fading flowers. None of these things therefore in His sight are wonderful, as though they were great or precious. Faith alone is such: this He honours and admires: this He counts acceptable to Himself."

You will ask, could wonder really exist in Christ? I would lay down that in Christ, according to the common opinion of theologians, besides that Divine knowledge which He had as God, there was a threefold knowledge, as He was man. 1. *Beatific*, by

which He beheld the essence of God, and in the enjoyment of which He was blessed. 2. *Infused*, by which, through the appearances sent into His soul by God, at the very moment of His Conception, He knew all things. 3. *Experimental*, by which those things which He understood by infused knowledge, He daily saw, heard, and understood experimentally.

I answer therefore, that in Christ wonder did not exist properly and absolutely, as something which flows from the depths of the heart. For wonder arises in us when we see or hear something new. But Christ, by means of infused knowledge, knew all things before they were done. Since therefore He was omniscient, nothing was to Him new, unknown, unexpected, or wonderful. Christ, however, stirred up in Himself, as it were, by experimental knowledge, when He met with anything new or wonderful, a certain, as it were, interior act of wonder, and the outward expression of that wonder, that so He might teach others to marvel at the same. Thus S. Augustine (lib. 1. *de Gen. contra Manichæos*): "Who indeed, save Himself, had wrought in the man that very faith at which He marvelled? But even if another had wrought it, why should He marvel who had foreknowledge? That the Lord wondered signifies that we must wonder, for whom it is needful as yet that we should thus be moved. But all such movements in Christ are signs, not of a perturbed mind, but of one teaching authoritatively." So also S. Thomas. Very well saith S. Cyprian (*Tract. de Spectaculis*), "Never will he wonder at human works who has known himself to be a child of God. He has been cast down from the height of his nobility, who is able to admire anything after God."

And he said to them which followed, &c. When Christ says, *I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel*, you must understand Him to speak of the ordinary run of people at the time of His preaching, for there was without doubt greater faith in the Blessed Virgin, in Abraham and Moses, and John the Baptist, and others. Or as S. Chrysostom, *I have not found so great faith*, that is, in proportion, for this centurion was a Gentile; those were believing

Israelites. The same S. Chrysostom prefers the faith of the centurion to the faith of the Apostles at their first vocation. Hear S. Chrysostom: "Andrew believed, but it was when John said, Behold the Lamb of God. Peter believed, but it was when Andrew had told him the glad tidings of the Gospel. Philip believed, but by reading the Scriptures. And Nathanael first received a sign of Christ's Divinity, and then offered the profession of his faith." Hear likewise Origen: "Jairus, a prince of Israel, asking in behalf of his daughter, said not, *Say in a word*, but *Come quickly*. Nicodemus, when he heard of the Sacrament of faith, answered, How can these things be? Martha and Mary said, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died, as though doubting that the power of God is everywhere present."

But I say unto you, &c. Christ here predicts the calling of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews. He alludes to Isaiah xliii. 5, &c., where is predicted the calling of the Gentiles from the four quarters of the earth, their grace and glory. *Shall sit down i.e., shall rest*, says S. Hilary. But the Greek is ἀνακλιθήσονται, *i.e.*, shall lie down as on a *triclinium*, or couch. They shall feast as guests at a magnificent entertainment. For to this the kingdom of heaven, and the felicity of Christ and His saints, is often compared, because of their perfect joy, security, and satisfaction. There is an allusion to Ps. xvii. 15, "When thy glory shall appear, I shall be satisfied" (Vulg.); and Ps. xxxvi. 8, "They shall be inebriated with the richness of thine house, and thou shalt give them to drink from the torrent of thy pleasure" (Vulg.).

But the children of the kingdom, &c., *i.e.*, destined and called to the kingdom as being Israelites, as being the progeny of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to whose seed God had promised both the earthly kingdom of Judah, and the spiritual kingdom of eternal glory in heaven. By a similar Hebrew idiom, they are called children of death, of hell, of the resurrection, to whom death or hell is threatened, or to whom the resurrection has been promised.

Into the outer darkness, of hell. Christ still keeps up the metaphor of a feast in the kingdom of heaven, a feast therefore in which was abundance of light. Observe that most of the ancients did not dine, or at least out very sparingly, after the manner of a lunch, but made supper their chief meal, at which they fed heartily, and were hilarious. And this was the time when they made their feasts, because then they had ease and leisure. For they did this, as Horace says, not to break into the day.

Hence the *triclinia*, where feasts were made, were called supper-rooms. It is plain that this was the custom among the Hebrews from the constant mention in Holy Scripture of *supper* and *supper chambers*, but rarely of dinner. Examples are the supper of Darius (3 Esdr. iii. 1), of Holofernes (Judith xii. 5), of Herod (Mark vi. 21), &c. In the Old Testament there is no mention of dinner except in Tobit ii. 1, Daniel xiii. 13, and Esther, when the Jews had been carried away to Assyria and Babylon, where they followed the customs of the Gentiles, and ate as those nations did. I except Jeroboam I., king of Israel, who invited the prophet who restored his hand home to dine with him. (1 Kings xiii. 7.) But this king was an idolater, the maker of the golden calves which the Israelites worshipped. So that it is not at all strange that he should affect gluttonous feasts.

Moreover, the first Christians were wont to fast until eventide, as Tertullian shows (lib. 1 *de Jejun.* c. 10). Indeed, as late as the time of S. Thomas Aquinas, who flourished A.D. 1270, it was customary to fast until three o'clock in the afternoon, when Christ expired upon the cross. And he who took food before that hour was considered not to have fasted, according to a decree of the Council of Cabillon. (See D. Thomas 2. 2. *quæst.* 147, *art.* 7, where, however, Chalcedon has crept in instead of Cabillon.)

Since, then, they did not dine at midday, but supped at night, there was abundance of light at the ancient feasts, as Virgil says:—

> "From golden roofs the lamps depend,
> And darkness from the guests defend."

With the guests, then, and in the supper-hall, was light, but without was darkness, which is here called the outer darkness—that is, outside the banquet.

The meaning of the passage is: the children of the kingdom the Jews, destined, for the sake of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to the kingdom of heaven, on account of their unbelief, in refusing to believe in Christ, shall be excluded from the royal and heavenly feast, and shall be driven into the outer darkness of hell.

Jesus saith unto the centurion, &c. From this it would appear that Christ had not gone into the centurion's house, nor touched his servant; but in the very place where the centurion met Him, there He healed the sick man, that He might confirm his master in the faith that He was the Messiah—yea, that He might show Himself to be God; for great faith gains great rewards, great confidence gains great things. As much as thou expectest from God, so much shalt thou obtain. Whence S. Bernard (on Ps. *Qui habitat*, *Serm.* 15), explaining tropologically God's words to Joshua—"Whatsoever place the soles of your feet shall tread upon shall be yours"—says, "Hope in the Lord, all ye congregation of the people; all that your feet tread upon shall be yours; for your foot is your hope."

Let masters learn from this narrative what great care they ought to bestow upon their servants, and how dear they ought to be to them. So dear was this servant to the centurion, that he employed the aid of the elders and his friends to call Christ to heal him. So too, in turn, ought servants to obey their masters with the greatest zeal, love, and reverence. Wisely saith Seneca, although he was a heathen (*Epist.* 47), "Are they servants? Still they are men. Are they servants? Still they belong to thy family. Are they servants? Yet they are thy fellow-servants, if thou considerest how both are in the power of fortune." And then he gives examples of servants who had been well treated by their masters, who were prepared to lay down their lives for them, if by so doing they could avert danger from them. Wherefore that

common saying is false, "As many servants, so many enemies." "For," saith he, "we do not have them as enemies, but we make them enemies, by treating them unkindly." Wherefore let all masters and superiors act towards their dependents as this centurion acted towards his servant, especially by bringing them to Christ, to be healed of the diseases of their souls, if not of their bodies.

Mystically, the centurion is every one who rules over his members, senses, and faculties, so that they, as it were soldiers, may fight for and serve God.

And when he was come into Peter's house, &c. We have here an inverted order of the narrative, for this miracle, and the other works of Christ which Matthew proceeds to relate, as far as the end of chap. ix. took place before the healing of the leper and the centurion's servant, before, indeed, the Sermon on the Mount, as may be gathered from Mark i. 23 and 29, Luke iv. 32 and 38, and, indeed, from S. Matthew himself. For the Sermon on the Mount was delivered in the hearing of the Twelve Apostles, and therefore of S. Matthew himself. Yet he relates his vocation subsequently to this, in ix. 9. The reason is, that Matthew wished to give, at the commencement of Christ's preaching, a summary of His doctrine, and then to relate in order His miracles, both those which He wrought before His sermon, and those which He wrought afterwards, in confirmation of His doctrine. The true order of the narrative is, then, as follows, as may be learnt by comparing Mark and Luke. After Christ had called Peter and Andrew from their fishing to follow Him, as Matthew relates (iv. 18), He entered into Capernaum. There He preached in the synagogue, and healed the demoniac. From thence He proceeded to Peter's house, and healed his mother-in-law. This miracle, therefore, and the others which follow to the end of chap. ix ought, according to chronological sequence, to be inserted in chap. iv., immediately after ver. 22.

Into Peter's house, which belonged to Peter and Andrew, as we find in S. Mark i. 29. This house was at Bethsaida, the native

place of Peter. (See John i. 44.) Bethsaida was close to Capernaum, about half-an-hour's journey. Or it may be that this was Peter's wife's mother's house, and that she lived in Capernaum itself, and that Peter was wont to call in there. For Mark and Luke seem to intimate that this miracle was wrought in Capernaum. The mention of this mother-in-law shows that Peter was called in marriage by Christ, and that he left his wife and a daughter, who in time to come, from her father, Peter, was called Petronilla. None of the Apostles, except Peter, are spoken of in the Gospels as having a wife. Peter's wife was called Perpetua, says Molanus, although others called her Concordia, and others again, Mary. In after time, when she had been converted to Christ, and was being led to martyrdom for her faith in Him, she was strengthened by S. Peter, who said, "O spouse, remember the Lord." This is related by Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* lib. 2). Petronilla, on account of her great beauty, was sought in marriage by a nobleman named Flaccus. She asked for three days to deliberate. The term being expired, she received Holy Communion from the priest Nicomede, after which she gave up her soul to God, and is reckoned among the Virgin Saints. Her name occurs in the Calendar on the last day of May, and her relics are still preserved at Rome, in the Basilica of S. Peter.

Sick of a fever; a great fever, says S. Luke. *Tropologically*, the fever of the soul is the fire of concupiscence, the burning heat of lust, of gluttony, of pride, of envy, &c. Listen to S. Ambrose (lib. 4 *in Luc. c.* 4, *ver.* 38). "Under the type of Simon's wife's mother, our flesh languishes under the fevers of various spiritual sicknesses, and is tempest-tossed by the varied enticements of immoderate desires. The fever of love, I may say, is no less than of heat. The one inflames the mind, the other the body. Our avarice is a fever, our lust is a fever. Hence the Apostle says, 'If they cannot contain let them marry, for it is better to marry than to burn.'" He subjoins the example of Theotimus, who, being told by his physicians that if he married he would lose his sight, exclaimed, "Farewell, dear light."

Christ comes as the heavenly physician to quench the heat of this fever of concupiscence within us by the dew of His grace, that grace which must be incessantly implored by those who are thus fevered in soul.

Whosoever then thou art who labourest under the fever of concupiscence, I do not say that thou shouldst embrace a monastic life, or that thou shouldst macerate thy body by hair shirts or the scourge, or drink nothing but water. I make an easy suggestion; frequently receive Holy Communion, and by so doing receive Christ into the house of thy soul. He is a virgin, and the son of a virgin, and by His own virgin flesh He will extinguish this fire. This assuredly is the most powerful medicine against lust, as Holy Scripture teaches, and the holy Fathers testify, and daily experience confirms. For this is "the wheat of the elect, and the wine that maketh virgins." (Zech. ix. 17, where see my commentary.)

There are nine correspondences between fever of the body and fever of the soul. 1. There is fever when noxious moisture and abnormal heat, opposed to the natural heat, affect the heart. Thus too there is fever in the soul when man's will is steeped in the love of concupiscence, which is contrary to the love of God.

2. As fever takes away the healthy disposition of the secretions of the body, so does the fever of the soul put an end to the due regulation of its passions and affections.

3. As fever is known by a violent pulse, so may the soul's fever be discerned by excessive cares and anxieties, as it were pulsating in the mind.

4. Fever excites thirst, which those who are in a fever do not quench by drinking, but rather augment, so does the soul's fever excite a thirst for riches, honours, and pleasures which is not extinguished by the possession of them, but increased.

5. Fever arises from cold, and ends in burning heat. So does the soul's fever often arise from negligence, ease, and torpor. Hence is the cupidity of luxury and pride kindled and inflamed.

6. Fever vitiates the taste, making sweet things and honey itself

appear bitter; so the soul's fever makes divine things—such as spiritual reading—appear insipid.

7. Fever makes a sound, flourishing, and beautiful body appear weak, pallid, ugly; so too does the soul's fever make the soul weak, unnerved, deformed.

8. Fever agitates a man, will not suffer him to rest; so does the soul's fever make a man unquiet, so that he cannot fix his mind, but, ever unstable, he falls into lust after lust.

9. As one fever is apt to produce another, so does one vice beget another and yet another. In short, the heretic labours under a pestilential fever; the slothful man under a hectic and slow fever; the glutton under a daily, and the inconstant man under a tertian fever.

And he touched her hand, &c. S. Luke adds, *He commanded the fever*. Gr. ἐπετίμησε τῷ πυρετῷ, *i.e.*, *He rebuked the fever*. As Euthymius says, with powerful authority He commanded, and as it were, threatened the fever. Well says B. Peter Chrysologus (*Serm.* 18), "Ye see how the fever let go its hold of her whom Christ held. There stood not infirmity where the Author of salvation was present. There could be no approach of death there where the Lifegiver had entered. *He took her by the hand*, it is said. What need could there be for touching her, when He had the power to command? Christ took hold of this woman's hand, for life, because Adam from a woman's hand had received death. He held her hand, that what the hand of presumptuous Eve had lost, the hand of her Maker might restore.

When even was come . . . he healed many that were sick. S. Luke says (iv. 40), *by imposition of hands*. For Christ did not disdain, with His most pure and Divine hands, to touch those who had ulcers, running sores, and leprosies, that He might show the power and virtue of His Divine touch, and heal them all.

That it might be fulfilled, &c. These words of Isaiah have a twofold meaning. The first is concerning diseases of the soul, *i.e.*, sins and their penalty, which Christ took upon Himself, and abolished upon the cross. This was Isaiah's chief meaning, as

appears from what follows, and from the words, *He carried.* The second meaning concerns diseases of the body, which are at once the types and result of diseases of the soul. These too, Matthew here says, *Christ bore:* not by actually becoming diseased Himself, but by compassion, and by wholly healing those who were diseased. Hence the Syriac translates, *He shall sustain our sicknesses.* Christ bore so many torments, and even the death of the cross, that He might do away with all infirmities, and death itself, either in this life or at the resurrection—in other words, that He might take away sin with all its consequences and penalties. Thus therefore Christ carried our sins, thus also our diseases and punishments. And thus Christ had the power of healing diseases in that He Himself took them upon Himself, by atoning for and expiating them upon the cross. Thus S. Chrysostom and Origen (See my comment on Is. liii. 4.)

And a certain scribe came to him, &c. This doctor of the Law seeing Jesus preparing to depart, and cross over the lake, and being moved by His preaching and miracles, and the concourse of applauding people, desired to be associated with Him as a disciple with a master.

And Jesus said unto him, &c. *Nests;* the Greek has κατασκηνώσεις, *i.e.*, shady coverts made by the boughs and leaves of trees. S. Cyprian (lib. 1. *ad Quirinum*, c. 11), and S. Augustine translate the word, *inns.*

The meaning is—common, worthless, and even noxious animals, such as foxes and birds of prey, have places of rest and shelter; but the Son of Man, He who was born of the Virgin, and made man, hath nothing of His own, not a cushion, or a bed, or a bench on which to rest His head.

Christ here detects and uncovers the latent ulcer of covetousness in the Scribe. It is as though He said to him, "Thou desirest to follow Me because thou seest Me pleasing to the people, because of the healing and benefits which I bestow upon them. Hence thou hopest, in following Me, to increase thy possessions, and pick up many gifts, as though I made Me and Mine

rich by the Gospel. But thou art mistaken, for I, as it were, the Master of perfection, am poor and a lover of poverty Myself, and such I wish My disciples to be, that being free from the care of things temporal, they may be wholly at leisure for God and preaching." When the Scribe heard this he was silent; and, being disappointed of his hope, withdrew himself from the eyes of Christ, as Matthew tacitly intimates. Thus S. Hilary, Theophylact, Euthymius, and S. Jerome explain. "Why," says S. Jerome, "do you wish to follow Me for the sake of riches and worldly gain, when I have not even one little guest-chamber?"

Let religious, who unite themselves to God by the profession of poverty, imitate this example of Christ, and look for support to His Providence.

This passage also refutes the heresy of those who condemn voluntary poverty, which religious profess.

The originator of this heresy was a certain Lombard, named Desiderius, in the time of Pope Alexander IV., and another called William of Holy Love, in the same age, who are entirely confuted by SS. Thomas and Bonaventura. By an entirely opposite error, other heretics, called *Apostolici*, have falsely concluded from this passage, as S. Augustine testifies (*Hæres.* 40), that this absolute poverty is necessary for all men for salvation. From the same passage the Waldenses, or Poor Men of Lyons, and Wickliffe, have falsely argued that it is unlawful for bishops and priests to possess any property, but that they ought to live only on alms, because Christ did so. But Christ did so being perfect, and gave it as a counsel, not as a command necessary to salvation. Hence this error is denounced by many decrees of Councils.

From this passage it is also plain that poverty, and its very marrow and efficacy, consist in this—that a man should possess and affect nothing as though it were his own, but should keep his affections free for God alone, to serve Him. And it is not repugnant to this spirit, but conformable to it, to possess in common things necessary for life. And so, by a decree of the Council of Trent (Sess. 25, c. 3), all religious, except the Franciscans, are

allowed to own even real property in common, that they may not be forced to beg, nor be anxious about supplies, nor become burdensome to the faithful. For even Christ and the Apostles had goods in common, of which Judas was the steward and dispenser, as appears from John xii. 6.

Son of Man. That is, Man sprung from man, as Christ constantly calls Himself, in His love of humility, because He who was God deigned for our sakes to become incarnate, and be made man.

But of what man is Christ the Son? First, by man, the heathen understood Joseph, whence they contended that he was begotten of Joseph, not conceived by the Holy Ghost, as S. Justin testifies (*Quæst.* 66 *ad Orthodoxos*). But this is contrary to Scripture and the Creeds.

2. Theophylact says, Christ is the Son of Man, *i.e.*, of the Virgin Mary, His mother; for man is common gender, and may be used of a male or a female, like the Greek ἄνθρωπος. But the addition in Greek of the masculine article shows that the word is here restricted to signify a male.

3. And more probably, others say, *Son of Man, i.e.*, of Abraham, or David; for to them it was promised that of their posterity the Messiah, or Christ, should be born.

4. Others, Christ is the *Son of Man, i.e.*, of *men*, as of the patriarchs and kings, from whom Matthew has deduced his genealogy.

5. And last, Christ is the *Son of Man, i.e.*, of Adam, because He, like all other men, was sprung from Adam. For Adam is called absolutely *man*, because he was the first man, and the parent of all other men. Hence Adam, in Hebrew, means *man*. There is a reference to Ezek. ii. 1. Ezekiel, who is a type of Christ, is called son of man, in Hebrew, *ben-adam, i.e., son of Adam.* Whence S. Gregory Nazianzen (*de Theolog. Orat.* 4) says, Christ is called Son of Adam, according to the Hebrew, not to show that He had a man for His father, but that through the Virgin Mary He derived His generation from Adam. For He willed to be born of Adam, that by this means He might repair

the Fall of Adam and his posterity. Hence S. Augustine (lib. 2 *de Consens. Evang.* c. 1) says, "He commendeth unto us how mercifully He hath deigned to be of us, and, as it were, commending the mystery of His wonderful Incarnation, He often sounds this title (*Son of Man*) in our ears."

Son of Man signifies more than man, because man can be created by God alone, as Adam was created; but *Son of Man* signifies sprung from Adam, the common parent, that first might be set forth the infinite humility of Christ, that He should deign to be sprung from a sinful man, and to receive in Himself his miseries and his mortality in that earthly body which He assumed. For Adam is derived from *Adama*, the *ground*, as *homo* from *humus*, *mortalis* from *mors*, "death." (See what I have said on Ezek. ii. 1.) 2. There is shown the wonderful brotherhood and charity of Christ to men, whereby He willed to be born in Bethlehem, of the same common parent Adam, that He might become the Brother of all men, and akin to them in blood, that He might be closely grafted into human nature, and united to it, even to the whole company of mankind, by human generation and natural birth from man, after the manner which I explained on chap. i. 18, according to those words of Isaiah, "Unto us a Son is born, a Child is given." *Son of Man* therefore denotes the perfect kindness, friendship, and condescension of Christ, and the blandishments of His love, by which He offers Himself to men as the *Son of Man*, as a Child to children, that with Him, as a most sweet Little One, as a most delightsome Brother, they may take delight, and have pleasure, according to the words, "My delight is with the sons of men." (Prov. viii.) Why dost thou fear, O man, to draw nigh to Jesus? Lo! He is the *Son of Man*. Why tremblest thou, O sinner, at the wrath of God? Come unto Jesus, the *Son of Man*, made a little Child for thee. In the whole world there is no Child so sweet—no son so dear. For "the *Son of Man* came to seek and to save that which was lost." And "the *Son of Man* came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." *Son of Man*, therefore, is the proper

name of, or rather the name appropriated to Christ. It is the mark of His dignity, and of His love, the wonder of all ages, that the Only-Begotten Son of God should, for men, deign to become the *Son of Man*, and to have His converse with men, that He might teach them the way of salvation, and redeem them by His Cross, and make them happy in heaven.

Ver. 21.—*And another of his disciples*, &c. This disciple was not one of the twelve Apostles, but some other person who was called by Christ to follow Him. We must supply from Luke ix. 59, that Christ previously said to this same person, *Follow me*. He did not refuse the call of Christ, but wished, after having discharged his debt of filial piety, to be more free to follow Him. So says the *Gloss*. From the answer of this disciple, given by S. Matthew, we may understand his questioning and vocation by Christ.

Lord. Reverently and obediently he speaks to Christ as desiring to do Him service; whereas the Scribe, with somewhat too much freedom, addressed Christ as *Teacher* (*magister*). The one was deservedly left, the other chosen. How much of evil was there in the Scribe? how much of good was there in this man? says S. Augustine. (*Serm.* 9 *de Verb. Domini.*)

Suffer me first, &c. Theophylact, and after him Franc. Lucas, think that his father was still living, and that he said in effect—"Suffer me to remain with my father, who is now an old man, that I may support him until he die. Then, having done what filial duty requires, I will follow Thee." Thus he asked for a long furlough from the spiritual warfare.

S. Chrysostom and others expound more plainly and accurately that his father was already dead, and that Christ most opportunely and benignantly called him. As though he said, "Thy father is now deceased, *Follow Me*. I will be to thee a better Father. He had need of thy good offices, but thou hast need of Mine. He was the author of thy carnal life; I will give thee spiritual and eternal life."

Clement of Alexandria, (*Stromat.* lib. 2) thinks that Philip, who was afterwards an Apostle, was the man to whom Christ said,

Suffer the dead to bury their dead. But the objection to this is that Philip had been already called by Christ, and was following Him, as is plain from John i. 43. Unless you assume that Philip had been a follower of Christ before this, but, having heard that his father had departed this life, asked Christ's permission to bury him, but did not obtain it. This would explain why he is here called a disciple by S. Matthew. *And another of his disciples.* And this seems very probable, especially as Clement relates the matter as certain.

But Jesus saith, &c. A second time Jesus calls him. Twice He saith, *Follow Me,* namely before his excusing himself, and afterwards because He effectually willed him to be His disciple. He puts aside the impediment which he alleged, and forbids him to return to bury his father. But He assigns most convincing reasons for His refusal. He says, *Suffer the dead to bury their dead.* Observe, Christ does not intend to condemn the burial of the dead, which is a work of mercy praised in the Book of Tobit. But He wished to teach that when God calls He must immediately be obeyed. For God knows our hindrances, and when He calls us in them He wishes us to break them off, and He in effect promises us His grace and help to enable us to do so. Wherefore He lays it down that following the call of God is to be preferred even to the burial of our parents. That is, divine are to be preferred to human duties, religion to nature, God to man. Christ here plays upon the word *dead.* For first *the dead* signifies those who are spiritually dead, as unbelievers and those who are destitute of the grace of God. Thus SS. Chrysostom, Jerome, and Augustine. Afterwards by *dead* He means those who are corporeally dead. For as a body separated from the soul is dead, so a soul separated from God is dead. As the soul is the life of the body so is God the life of the soul, says S. Augustine. *Let the dead,* such as the Jews who reject belief in Me; let those who are steeped in sin and worldliness, *bury their own dead, i.e.,* those who are figuratively dead like themselves, or those of their own relations who are naturally dead, and, it may be, spiritually dead likewise. But as

for thee, I would have thee follow Me, who am the true Life, and live with Me here through My perfect grace, and in the world to come in perfect glory, and preach this Gospel to others, as Luke adds.

Hear S. Ambrose: "He is not allowed to go and bury his father, that thou mayest understand that human things must give way to Divine things."

Tropologically. Christ signifies that they are dead, and busy themselves with dead things, who give up their minds to the wills and legacies of parents or relations. But to this His disciple He says, Thy destiny is to live for God, and as thou hast begun to be alive unto Him by grace, go on thus to live unto Him, and serve Him, the living God. And so leave to the dead and dying the things which are dead and about to die. Thus S. Jerome: "If the dead bury the dead, we ought to care not for the things which are dead, but for those which are alive, lest whilst we are anxious about the dead we too should be called dead."

And S. Chrysostom says, "If it was forbidden to be absent from spiritual things, for the brief space of time needed for burying parents, weigh well the punishment of which they shall be counted worthy who are always absent from those things which are worthy of Christ, because they prefer the worthless and abject affairs of worldly business to things which are indeed necessary, and that even when none compels.

Luke adds (ix. 60), *But go thou and preach the kingdom of God*, namely, the way by which men may arrive at the kingdom of heaven—that is to say, by faith, and a life conformed to the Gospel which Christ has made known. As S. Augustine says (*de Verb. Domini, Serm.* 7), "When the Lord is preparing men for the Gospel, He will not receive any such excuses as have to do with fleshly and temporal affairs." For, as S. Chrysostom says again, "It is far better to preach the kingdom of God, and rescue others from death, than to bury one who is dead and can be of no use, especially when there are other persons to discharge the office." And S. Gregory speaks to the same purpose (lib. 19, *Moral.* c. 14)

"Sometimes in our actions lesser good deeds are to be set aside, in favour of other things of greater usefulness. For who is ignorant that it is indeed a good work to bury the dead, but that it is better to preach the Gospel?"

And when he had gone up into a ship, &c. The Vulgate has *navicula*, "a little ship," because they were small boats, which were used for crossing the lake, and for fishing. S. Mark adds (iv. 36), *they received him as he was, i.e.*, as he was teaching the multitudes who were standing upon the shore.

And, behold, there was a great tempest in the sea. S. Luke adds, *the waves were filling the ship, and they were in jeopardy.* Bede and Strabus and the *Gloss* are of opinion that in this storm Christ's ship alone was tossed, but not the other little ships which accompanied them, that Christ might show thereby that He was the Author of the storm arising, as well as of its being made to cease. But it is more correct to suppose that the other boats were also storm-tossed, for these boats were near, yea, close to Christ's ship, that there might be shown the greater fury of the tempest, and the greater power of Christ in calming it. Moreover, God permitted this storm to arise from natural causes, such as vapours, and winds concurring with them, so that Christ raised and sent this storm.

He did this—1. That He might declare His power, and show that He is Lord of the sea as well as the land, says Origen. (*Hom.* 6 *in Diver.*) Hence the angel who appeared to S. John set his right foot upon the sea, as though commanding it. (Rev. x. 2.) For this angel represented Christ, as Bede, Richard of S. Victor, and others say.

2. That He might exercise His disciples in bearing, as well the persecutions of men as the storms and tempests of wind and rain which they must often experience in going about the world to evangelize it. So Theophylact. Whence also S. Chrysostom gives this reason, "that He might exercise the athletes of the world in temptations and terrors."

3. That His disciples, and the other passengers in the ship

might, through the miracle of the quelled tempest, believe in Him that He was very and omnipotent God.

Tropologically, this tempest in the sea, says S. Chrysostom, was a type of the future trials of the Church. For the ship in the waves represents the Church and the soul in temptations, by which they are quickened and profited. For a life without trial is like a dead sea, as Seneca says (*Epist.* 67). And thus a man who is without temptation is like one who is in a swoon, or dead. Temptation rouses him up to exert his faculties, that he may vanquish it.

Again, as a tempest drives ships before it, that they may the more speedily arrive at their wished-for haven, so does temptation stimulate a man to greater zeal for virtue, whereby he may be borne on towards heaven. As Chrysologus says (*Ser.* 20), "It is not serene weather which proves the skill of the pilot, it is tempestuous weather which does that. Any sort of a sailor can manage a ship in a gentle breeze, but for the confusion of a tempest the skill of the best captain is needed."

The tempest therefore of the waves and winds is the temptation of pride, gluttony, lust, envy, and so on.

Let *him then* who is beaten by temptation do as sailors do in a storm. First they furl their sails, that the fury of the wind may not have so much power over the ship to hurry it to destruction. Thus let him who is tempted furl the sails of his pleasures, and give himself up to fasting and penance.

2. Sailors make for the open sea, that their ship may not strike against rocks. So let him who is tempted flee from the world and worldly things, and let him betake himself to God as a haven of refuge; and let him say with the Psalmist, "My soul refused comfort: I thought upon God and was refreshed." (Ps. lxxvii.)

3. Sailors cast fittings and merchandise into the sea, that they may lighten the ship; so let the tempted unburden themselves by means of contrition and confession of the heavy weight of their sins, and lighten their minds. Hence doctors teach that they who are about to go on a voyage, especially a long and perilous one,

ought to go to confession, that they may place themselves in a state of grace, as persons drawing nigh to the article of death, not once only, but in a manifold manner.

Lastly, a good captain, maintaining his courage, and having presence of mind, tries every way of escaping from the peril of the storm. Let the mind of him who is tempted do the same. A master of a ship, says S. Cyprian (*Tract. de Mortal.*) is proved by a storm, as a soldier is by a battle.

But he was asleep. This was voluntary, but at the same time natural sleep. 1. That the winds and storm might increase, so that Christ's power and authority might be the more manifested by His quelling them.

2. "There is set forth," says S. Ambrose, "the security of His power, that whilst all others were afraid He abode in calm serenity, so that when we are in any similar tribulation we might flee unto Him, and fix our hopes firmly upon Him, according to the saying in Proverbs xxviii. 1 : "The righteous is bold as a lion."

Moreover the pillow upon which, as S. Mark relates, Christ rested is mystically, 1. A good conscience. 2. Resignation to the will of God. 3. Confidence in God's power and providence. For on this a believer rests, and as it were sleeps, in all adversities.

Origen (*Hom.* 6 *in Diversis*) says, Christ slept as to His body, but was awake as to His Deity. The sleep of Jonah when the rest who were in the ship were in peril was a type of this. See what I have there said. Moreover what kind of sleep this of Christ's was, and wherein it differed from ours, see in Toletus, *Annotat.* 43, *in* 8. *cap. Luc.*

Tropologically, says the *Gloss*, Christ sleeps when we are negligent : but when faith revives He commands the winds and the waves.

And he said unto them, Why are ye fearful, &c. He said this before He had stilled the tempest, according to S. Matthew's order in this place, though S. Mark and S. Luke mention it afterwards. It was fitting that the extreme terror of the disciples should be

calmed before the raging of the sea, and that their waning faith should be strengthened that it might be rewarded by the cessation of the storm. So Jansen and others.

Of little faith. For ye do not seem perfectly to believe that I am God; and ye do not trust to My providential care, nor believe that whilst I am asleep I know of your peril, and will deliver you from it. So S. Chrysostom.

1. Faith here may be taken in the strict use of the word. Or, 2. for confidence, which is produced and sharpened by faith. On the other hand, little faith is the cause of little confidence. S. Luke gives the striking question of our Lord to them, *Where is your faith?* Hear S. Bernard: "Though the world rages, though the enemy roars, though the flesh itself lusts against the spirit, yet will I put my trust in Thee."

Then he arose. For *rebuked*, the Greek has ἐπετίμησε which corresponds to the Hebrew גער *gaar*. *He chided*, as the Arabic translates, *as a master does his servant*. Whence S. Mark says, according to the literal translation of the Greek, *He threatened the wind, and said unto the sea, Be silent, be muzzled.*

By these expressions is denoted the great violence by which the sea was tossed with the winds, such as no human power but only Divine, could make to cease. Here, therefore, Christ shows that He was God, since He, as their Master, commanded the winds and the sea.

Tropologically. Christ thought of, and invoked in the mind, commands the persecutions of the Church, and the temptations of the soul, as S. Augustine teaches: "Hast thou heard reviling? It is the wind. Art thou angry? It is the waves. For when the wind blows, the waves arise, the ship is in peril, thy heart is in danger, for thy heart is tossed by waves. When thou hearest reproach, thou desirest to vindicate thyself. Lo, thou art avenged, and yielding to another's evil, thou hast shipwrecked thyself. And why is this? It is because Christ is asleep within thee. Thou hast forgotten Christ. Awake Him therefore; call Him to remembrance. Let Christ keep vigil within thee. And think thou

upon Him. Why shouldst thou wish to be avenged? He hath cut thee off from vengeance by His cry upon the Cross, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'" And after some other remarks, S. Austin proceeds: "I will refrain from anger, and will return to the quiet of my heart. Christ commanded the sea, and there was a calm. What I have said with reference to anger, you may apply to all your other temptations. Temptation arises, it is the wind. Thou art troubled, it is the waves. Awake Christ and let Him speak with thee."

Allegorically, Bede says: "The ship with its yard-arm is the tree of the Cross, by the help of which we who were sunk in the waves of the sea, proceed as Christ's disciples to the privileges of the eternal country. For Christ says, 'If any man will come after Me, let him take up the Cross and follow Me.'"

Anagogically, "Christ slept in the time of His Passion. The tempest arose which was stirred up by the blasts of the devil. The disciples awake the Lord, whose death they had witnessed, by desiring His Resurrection. He rises with a speedy Resurrection. He rebukes the wind—that is, the pride of the devil. He calms the tempest—that is, the insulting madness of the Jews. He chides His disciples, for He upbraided them for their incredulity after His Resurrection."

And there was a great calm, for as S. Jerome says, "All creatures feel their Creator; and things which are senseless to us are sensible to Him." Or, as Origen says, "It became Him who was so great to do great things."

And the men marvelled, saying, &c. These men were not the disciples, but the sailors and others who were in the ship of Jesus, and in the other ships which accompanied it. For, as Origen says, "The disciples are never named but with the mark of distinction, *Apostles*, or *Disciples*."

What manner of man. The Greek is ποταπὸς, which is not simply a particle of interrogation, but is uttered with an emphasis of wonder and admiration. "Who is this? He does not seem to be like other men, but a Being of a different race."

And when he was come to the other side, &c. This miracle of healing the demoniac is given with greater fulness by S. Luke. The commentary, therefore, upon it will be given in S. Luke viii. 27—40.

Hast thou come hither to torment us before the time? From these words some have thought that the devils have not yet received the extreme punishment of their offences, and that they will not be condemned to be tormented in hell before the Day of Judgment. S. Hilary has been thought to be of this opinion, by saying (*Can.* 8), "It cried out, why should He grudge them their position? (in the demoniac) why should He attack them before the time of judgment?" The same opinion is by some ascribed to S. Irenæus, Justin, Lactantius, Eusebius, Nicephorus; but I have found nothing of the kind in their writings. And the words of S. Hilary do not bear that meaning, but only say what S. Matthew relates.

For it is certain from Scripture and the Fathers that the devils, from the beginning of the world were condemned as soon as they sinned, and were tormented in the fire of hell. For by that fire they are tormented, even when they are away from it, having gone forth from hell, and taken up their abode in the air. This is brought about by the omnipotence of God. The fire of hell is a supernatural instrument of the omnipotent God, hence by the will of God, it can operate in the most distant places.

When therefore they said to Christ, *Art thou come*, &c., they did not speak of the ancient, perpetual, irrevocable torment of hell fire, but they deprecated any new torment being inflicted upon them by Christ. This new torment was their expulsion from the bodies of those whom they were in the habit of possessing, as S. Chrysostom says, and their banishment to the prison-house of hell.

CHAPTER IX.

2 Christ curing one sick of the palsy, 9 calleth Matthew from the receipt of custom, 10 eateth with publicans and sinners, 14 defendeth his disciples for not fasting, 20 cureth the bloody issue, 23 raiseth from death Jairus' daughter, 27 giveth sight to two blind men, 32 healeth a dumb man possessed of a devil, 36 and hath compassion of the multitude.

AND he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city.

2 And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed; and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

3 And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This *man* blasphemeth.

4 And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?

5 For whether is easier, to say, *Thy* sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?

6 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.

And he arose, and departed to his house.

8 But when the multitudes saw *it*, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.

9 And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

10 And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.

11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?

12 But when Jesus heard *that*, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

13 But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

14 Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?

15 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

16 No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment; for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.

17 Neither do men put new wine into old bottles; else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.

18 While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.

19 And Jesus arose and followed him, and *so did* his disciples.

20 And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind *him*, and touched the hem of his garment:

21 For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.

22 And Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

23 And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise,

24 He said unto them, Give place; for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.

25 But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.

26 And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

27 And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, *Thou* son of David, have mercy on us.

28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.

29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.

30 And their eyes were opened: and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See *that* know man know *it*.

31 But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.

32 As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man, possessed with a devil.

33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, it was never so seen in Israel.

34 But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.

35 And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly *is* plenteous, but the labourers *are* few:

38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

Passed over: that is, sailed across the sea of Galilee, to its western side. *And came into his own city.* Sedulius thinks Bethlehem is meant, because he was born there. S. Jerome, with more probability, understands Nazareth, where He was brought up. The best opinion is that of S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Maldonatus, and many others, who say, Capernaum is to be understood, in which Christ often dwelt. And (chap. iv. 13) S. Matthew says that, leaving Nazareth, Christ dwelt there. And S. Mark teaches that the healing of the paralytic, which is now to be related, took place at Capernaum. (Mark ii. 3.) As Christ ennobled Bethlehem by His birth, Nazareth by his education, Egypt by His flight, Jerusalem by His Passion, so he adorned Capernaum, by His dwelling, preaching, and working miracles there.

And, behold, they brought to him, &c. S. Mark says, the paralytic man was carried by four bearers. Learn from this to care not only for thine own salvation, but for that of thy neighbours, and that earnestly, as well because charity demands it, as because God often chastises the good as well as the bad, because the good neglect to chastise and amend the faults of the bad.

And seeing their faith, &c. The faith of those who brought the paralytic to Christ. For when they were not able to bring him into the house to Christ, they carried him up upon the roof. The roofs of the houses in Palestine are not steep, as they are in Germany, but flat, more so than they are in Italy. *They uncovered the roof;* that is, they broke through it, by taking away the tiles. S. Mark says, *they laid bare the roof:* and thus they let down the sick man by means of ropes before Christ. All these things showed their great faith and devotion to Christ.

Their refers to those who brought him, say SS. Ambrose and Jerome. S. Chrysostom adds, that the faith of the paralytic himself is included, for through this faith he wished himself to be carried, and let down through the roof before Christ. Neither would he have heard the words, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," unless he had had faith. Moreover this faith was the faith of miracles. Learn from him that the measure of prayer is faith and hope. For what

thou hopest from Christ that shalt thou obtain of Him. For the more thou enlargest the lap of thy soul by hope, the more capacious thou makest it, and the more worthy that God should fill it, according to these words in the Psalm, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." And, "I opened my mouth and drew in my breath." (Ps. cxix. 131.)

Wherefore Christ said to this man, *Son, be of good cheer.* "Trust that thou shalt be by Me miraculously healed, first in thy soul from sin, then in thy body from palsy. For because of sin, God has afflicted thee with this disease. Observe, this paralytic already had faith and hope in Christ as I have just shown, but Christ bids him confirm and increase his faith. Moreover, by these outward words, *Be of good cheer,* but more by the inward *afflatus* of His grace, Christ stirred up the paralytic to an act of great faith, hope, and sorrow for the sins which he had committed, and firm determination to enter upon a new and holy life, and love God above all things, that by this means he might be in a fit state to receive remission of his sins. For such are the dispositions which Scripture in other places requires. Christ, however, here and elsewhere, names and requires faith alone, and attributes salvation, more especially of the body, to faith, because faith is the prime origin and root of hope, fear, sorrow, and love of God. And faith in Christ was the thing, at that time, to be especially insisted on.

The heretics, therefore, can find nothing in this passage to prove that faith only properly justifies; especially since what is here treated of is miraculous faith, which they themselves distinguish from justifying faith. I may add that Christ here speaks of the faith of the bearers as much, or more than he does of the faith of the paralytic, and their faith could not justify the sick man.

Son. For he truly is a son of God, whose sins are forgiven, says Haymo. Observe here the kindness of Christ, addressing the sick man with these most sweet words. Hence S. Jerome exclaims, "O wondrous humility: He calls this despised and feeble one, all the joints of whose limbs were loosed, *Son,* a man whom the priests would not deign to touch."

Thy sins are forgiven thee: Gr. ἀφέωνται, *have been forgiven.* This is a Hebraism for *are forgiven.*

S. Chrysostom observes that Christ first forgave the paralytic his sins, and then healed him, that from the calumnious remarks of the Pharisees, which he foresaw would follow upon what he had said and done, He might take occasion to prove His Divinity. This He did by a triple miracle, as an irrefragable proof, first by declaring openly their secret thoughts and murmurs against Him, secondly by healing the paralytic, thirdly by performing the miracle with this end in view, that, by it, He might demonstrate He had the power of forgiving sins.

Taken, however, literally, the more patent reason was, that He might show that palsies, and other diseases often arise, not so much from natural causes, as from sin. For He forgives the sins first, and then He heals the paralytic; showing that when the cause was taken away, the effect followed.

This is why it is ordered by the canon law that physicians should seek the health of a sick man's soul before that of his body. (See chap. *Cum infirm. de pœniten. et remiss.*) This rule is strictly observed at Rome, where physicians after the third day of illness, especially when there is peril of death, may not go near a sick person, except he forthwith cleanse his soul from sin by sacramental confession. For, as S. Basil says (*Reg.* 55), "Oftentimes are diseases the scourges of sins, which are sent for no other purpose than that we should amend our lives."

Again, expositors collect from this passage that those who were corporeally healed by Christ were usually spiritually healed also by Him, and justified, as was the case with the paralytic. And this is consonant with Christ's liberality, that He should not bestow a half-healing, but whole and perfect salvation. For the works of God are perfect. And we must remember that Christ came into the world chiefly to bestow spiritual health. This is what he says of another paralytic, "I have made a whole man sound upon the sabbath." (John vii. 23, Vulg.)

And, behold, certain of the scribes, &c. *Within themselves.* Syr., *in*

their soul; because He takes away God's special prerogative of pardoning sin, and claims it for Himself, which would be a grave dishonour done to God, and therefore blasphemy. Thus they thought, supposing Christ was not God, but a mere man. This was their perpetual and obstinate error, which led them perpetually to persecute Him, even unto the death of the Cross. Wherefore S. Mark adds, that they said, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" For sin is an offence against God, a violation of the Divine Majesty, so that no one can pardon it, except God Himself.

And Jesus knowing their thoughts, &c. S. Mark adds that Jesus knew *in His Spirit.* This was not because another revealed to Him the thoughts and blasphemies of the Scribes, as the prophets knew such things, but by Himself and His own Spirit, pervading and penetrating all things. From this the Fathers rightly prove the Divinity of Christ against the Arians. For He searches the hearts, a thing which God alone can do. Thus S. Jerome, who adds, "Even when keeping silence, He speaks. As though He said, 'By the same power and majesty by which I behold your thoughts, I am able also to forgive men their sins.'" So too S. Chrysostom and others. Whence Chrysologus says, "Receive the tokens of Christ's Divinity: behold Him come to the secret hiding-places of thy thoughts."

You may say, the Scribes might have raised the following objection:—"Thou, O Jesus, indeed knowest and revealest our secret thoughts, but not by Thine own Spirit, for that Thou in no way makest plain to us, but by the Spirit of God. Therefore Thou art a prophet, and not God, that thou shouldst remit sins." I reply, if the Scribes acknowledged Jesus to be a prophet, then surely they ought to have believed that He was speaking the truth when He said that He had, of Himself, power to forgive sins, and therefore that He was God. Again, in the Old Testament, the power of remitting sins was given to none of the prophets, but it was promised to Messiah alone by the prophets. Therefore they ought to have acknowledged that Jesus was the

Messiah, and consequently God, as is plain from many passages of Scripture.

Lastly, Christ by His command alone, and proper authority, both healed the paralytic, and forgave him his sins, and so in this, as in all His other miracles, He had this end in view, that He might convince them He was the Messiah—that is, the Son of God, who had come in the flesh, the Saviour of the world, the Redeemer of sinners, who had been foretold by Moses and the prophets.

Whether is easier, &c. You may ask, whether of these two is absolutely the more difficult? I answer—

1. It is, *per se*, more difficult to forgive sins than to heal a paralytic person, yea, than to create heaven and earth. And there is *à priori* reason for this: first, because sin, as an enemy of God, is far further away from God than a paralytic, yea, than any created thing, forasmuch as these are in themselves good: yea, further than nothingness, out of which all things were made, itself, for nothingness is only negatively and privatively opposed to entity and God; but sin is diametrically opposed and repugnant to God. For there are no contraries which are so mutually opposed as supreme goodness and supreme badness—that is to say, God and sin.

2. Because remission of sins is something of a higher order than the natural order. It has to do with the supernatural order of grace. Grace is the highest communion with the Divine Nature: for by grace "we are made partakers of the divine nature," as S. Peter says (2 Pet. i. 4).

I observe, however, secondly: on the contrary, Christ here seems to speak of remission of sins as being easier than the healing of the paralytic. This was so, because the latter was more difficult in respect of the Jews; and it was a more perilous thing besides. For he who saith, I forgive thee thy sins, cannot be convicted of falsehood, whether he remits them or not. For neither sin, nor its remission, are things that can be seen. But he who saith to a paralytic, *Arise and walk*, exposes both himself

and his good name to great peril, if the sick man does not arise. Such a one will be convicted by all of imposture and falsehood. Just as we are accustomed to say, It is easier to write a history of Tartary than a history of Italy: because here a man might be convicted of falsehood by multitudes; but there by no one.

Lastly, the healing of paralysis is a physical operation, and, physically speaking, more difficult than the remission of sins, which is, *per se*, a moral act, of like nature with sin itself.

Jansen adds, With respect to God, both are equally easy and divine, for both are miraculous, and both require exercise of omnipotent power.

Moreover, although of itself the healing of the paralytic was a ess work than the remission of sins, yet Christ conclusively proves by it that He had the power of forgiving sins.

Ver. 6.—*But that ye may know*, &c. Observe the expression, *Son of Man*, for Christ forgave sins, not only as He was God, but in that He was man, authoritatively and meritoriously. Because His Humanity was hypostatically united to His Divinity, and subsisted in the Divine Person of the Son of God, therefore He was able to make full satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.

Wherefore this primary power and authority of forgiving sins was given unto Him, next unto God, which power He is able to grant unto others likewise, such as priests, who are instituted by Him, as His ministers, that they too should forgive sins. Whence S. Thomas says (3 *part. quæst.* 63. *art.* 3), "The power of the excellence of Christ standeth in four things. 1. Because His merit, and the virtue of His Passion, operate in the sacraments. 2. Because by His Name the sacraments are sanctified. 3. Because He Himself, who gives virtue to the sacraments, had power to institute them. 4. Because the *effect* of the sacraments—in other words, the remission of sins, and grace—Christ is able to confer without the sacraments. This power is peculiar to Christ alone, *quâ* man; and therefore it has been communicated neither to priest nor pontiff, nor to S. Peter."

Rise, take up thy bed, &c. *Rise*: be sound and healed of thy

palsy; and to show to the Scribes and all the people that thou art healed, *take up thy bed*, that now thou mayest bear that which has lately borne thee, as Sedulius says in this place, "He himself, with grateful thanks, repaid his hire." Instead of *bed* (*lectum*), Mark has *grabatum*. *Grabatus*, says Sipontius, is a narrow sort of couch on which we recline at noon, as if from *carabatus*, something on which we lay our head, from καρὰ, *the head*, and, βατὸν, *passing*. Whence the line of Martial—

"Went the three-legged grabatus, went the three-legged table."

And he arose, &c. He arose at once, for what Christ said was straightway done. And the man walked off with the bed upon his shoulders.

S. Simon Stylites followed the example of this miracle of Christ, as may be seen in his Life, taken by Surius out of Theodoret. "A certain Saracen prince brought to him a paralytic domestic, and asked him to heal him. The holy man commanded him to be brought into the midst, and bade him abjure the impiety of his ancestors. After the man had done this, he asked him if he believed in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. He replied that he did believe. 'If thou believest,' said he, 'rise up.' As soon as he had arisen, he bade him take up and carry the beforenamed prince, who was an excessively fat man, upon his shoulders, as far as his tent. And he immediately raised him up, and carried him whither he was bidden. All the spectators were amazed at this miracle, and glorified God." In a similar manner, S. Bernard, at the request of the King of France, healed a man sick of the palsy, with the sign of the Cross, and bade him take up his bed.

Tropologically; by the sick man's taking up, and carrying his bed is meant, that by the just judgment of God it cometh to pass that the sinner who aforetime willingly consented to temptation, after he has repented, *feels temptation against his will*. For repentance truly takes away sin, but not sinful habits and depraved inclinations, which the sinner of his own will contracted and put on. Thus S. Mary of Egypt, after her conversion, felt for seven-

teen years the sharp goads of lust, because for so many years she had shamefully lived in lust.

But when the multitudes saw it they marvelled, &c. Instead of *marvelled,* the Latin Vulgate has, *they feared.* S Mark adds, that the multitude said, *We never saw it after this fashion.* S. Luke, *We have seen strange things to-day.* For this man's whole body was paralyzed. S. Mark says that, *he was borne of four*, which shows that the palsy had affected every limb. He was a different paralytic from the one of whom S. John makes mention (v. 2), who was healed in the Sheep-market at Jerusalem. That man had no one carrying him: neither did he believe, as this one did, to whom it was said, *Son, be of good cheer.*

Tropologically; paralysis is any disease of the soul whatsoever, but especially of fleshly lust, and the carelessness and indifference to spiritual things which it generates. For it so entirely prostrates the soul, that it is without power to lift itself up to virtue, to heaven, to God. Wherefore the man that labours under this disease must be carried by bearers, that is, by pastors, preachers, confessors, up upon the housetop, that is, to the desire of salvation and heavenly things; and then must be let down through the roof to the feet of Christ; and they must ask of Him by earnest prayer to heal him by His grace, and restore to him the power of motion, and the sense of spiritual things. Then when he is healed, let him give thanks to Christ his Saviour, and let him not be slothful, but let him go away to the house of his mind and conscience, and sweep it clean of vices, and adorn it with all virtuous actions. Thus ought the soul to trust in the Lord, because He alone is able to supply all her wants. She ought to arise from the sleep of sin, and the bed of depraved habits, by calling to mind into what a state she has fallen, which she doth by confession; for as he who arises, so also does he who confesses, come forth: she ought to take up her bed, which pertains to satisfaction, for when that is enjoined in confession, it is a sort of burden to be borne, for the flesh which, as a bed, gave pleasure, and as it were carried the dead soul, ought, after remission and satisfaction, to be a burden

to a man, as it was to him who cried out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" So Salermon, Jansen, Toletus, and others, expound this passage.

Anagogically, understand it of the celestial glory, concerning which the Psalmist speaks, "I was glad when they said unto me, We will go into the house of the Lord." (Ps. cxxii. 1.) For, in the resurrection, the Lord will say, "Arise, that is, from death; and take up thy bed, that is, resume thy body, endowed with glorious gifts; and go into thine house, that is, into the eternal and heavenly mansion."

And as Jesus passed forth from thence, &c. *Custom*, in Greek, τελος, means *revenue;* from which *telonium*, the word here used by S. Matthew, means the house, or place where the sailors and merchants paid the tribute and customs' dues upon their ships and merchandise. Here sat the publicans, who were the farmers and collectors of these dues. Hence the Persian version, instead of *telonium* has, *in the house of payment;* the Ethiopic has, *in the forum*, or *market-place*. Matthew was one of these publicans; whence it is probable that his house was at Capernaum, by the shore of the Sea of Galilee, at a point where the vessels touched. The Roman Senate and the people were accustomed to let the tribute which was due to them from their subjects for a stipulated sum.

Jansen, in his *Harmony of the Gospels*, says, that persons who have carefully surveyed the Holy Land, assert that the spot where Matthew was called is still pointed out, outside of Capernaum, near the Sea. Mark and Luke say, that Matthew was *sitting* at the *telonium*, because, by this word, they seem to mean not a house, but a table, on which they were counting the tribute money.

Named Matthew. Matthew names himself, both out of humility, that he might confess to the whole world that he had been a publican and a sinner, and also out of gratitude, that he might make known abroad the exceeding grace of Christ towards him, just as S. Paul does: "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." (1 Tim. i. 15.)

Follow me: Whom in Capernaum thou hast heard preaching heavenly doctrine, and confirming it by many miracles, and especially by that recent healing of the paralytic. He calls Matthew, already subdued by the fame of His miracles, says Chrysostom. Observe the condescension of Christ who calls Matthew, the *publican*, and so a man infamous among the Jews, not only to grace but to His family and intimate friendship and Apostleship.

And he arose, &c. Note here the efficacy of Christ's vocation, and the ready obedience of Matthew. Hear what S. Jerome says about it. "Porphyry and Julian find fault in this place, either with the lying unskilfulness of the historian, or else with the folly of those persons who immediately followed the Saviour, as though they irrationally followed the first person who called them. But they do not consider that great miracles and mighty signs had preceded this calling. And there can be no doubt that the Apostles had witnessed these things before they believed. This at least is certain, the very refulgence and majesty of the hidden Divinity, which shone even in His human countenance, was able to attract to Him those who saw Him as soon as they beheld Him. For if there be in a magnet, which is but a stone, such force that it is able to attract, and join unto itself rings and straws, how much more is the Lord of all creatures able to draw unto Himself whom He will."

Thus then as a magnet draws iron unto it, so did Christ draw Matthew, and by His drawing, gave him his virtues, and chiefly his exceeding love of God, zeal for souls, ardour in preaching. Listen to the account of S. Matthew's conversion, which he himself gave to S. Bridget, when praying at his tomb at Malphi: "It was my desire at the time I was a publican to defraud no man, and I wished to find out a way by which I might abandon that employment, and cleave to God alone with my whole heart. When therefore He who loved me, even Jesus Christ was preaching, His call was a flame of fire in my heart; and so sweet were His words unto my taste, that I thought no more of riches than of

straws: yea, it was delightful to me to weep for joy, that my God had deigned to call one of such small account, and so great a sinner as I to His grace. And as I clave unto my Lord, His burning words became fixed in my heart, and day and night I fed upon them by meditation, as upon sweetest food."

And it came to pass as he sat at meat, &c. This was in Matthew's own house, for he is silent about his virtues, outspoken about his errors. This appears from what Luke says, *Levi*, that is, Matthew, *made him a great feast in his own house:* to this feast he invited many of his companions, publicans like himself, and sinners, that they might be drawn by the kindness of Christ to follow Him, as he had done. It is indeed a sign of true conversion to be anxious that others also should be converted from their sins. For good is self-diffusive, and charity instigates men to seek the salvation of other lost sinners.

The office of a publican, although a just one in itself, and one that could be exercised without sin, yet, because avaricious men frequently undertook it from love of gain, who extorted unjust dues, especially from the poor, publicans were accounted infamous among the Jews, and public sinners, as public usurers are similarly accounted among Christians. There was this also, that the Jews maintained that they, as a people dedicated to God, ought not to pay tribute to the Romans, who were Gentiles and idolaters: for this was contrary to the liberty and dignity of the children of God. Thus they detested the publicans, who exacted the tribute.

Sinners are here distinguished from *publicans*. These sinners seem to have been dissolute Jews, who cared little for the law and religion of the Jews, and lived in a heathenish manner, or who had apostatized to heathenism.

And when the Pharisees saw it, &c. These are the words, not of those who asked a question, but of those who were making an accusation. As much as to say, "Your Master Christ acts contrary to the law of God and the traditions of the Fathers. Why do you listen to Him, and follow Him? He associates with

sinners. He is bringing the stain of their sins and infamy upon you."

But when Jesus heard that, &c.: from the report of His disciples. For even the Pharisees did not dare to make this charge to Christ Himself. *He saith*, not to His disciples, but to the Pharisees, for He turned Himself to those from whom the complaint proceeded, as is clear from what follows. *They that are whole*, &c. As a physician is not infected by the diseases of those who are sick, but rather overcometh diseases, and drives them away, and therefore it is not a disgrace, but an honour to a physician to be associated with the sick, so in like manner I, who have been sent from heaven to earth by God the Father, to be a physician of sin-sick souls, am not contaminated by their sins when I associate with them, but rather heal them, which is the highest praise to Me, and the greatest benefit to them. I therefore am the Physician, not the companion of sinners.

But go ye: that is, *go away from Me; depart out of My sight.* They are the words of one repudiating them. *And learn*, what Hosea says (vi. 6), *I will have mercy and not sacrifice: i.e.*, I prefer mercy to sacrifice, although sacrifice is the noblest act of religion. Therefore follow mercy, even as I do, that ye may save sinners. For I prefer mercy, and to have pity upon miserable sinners, rather than with you to offer victims to God. See what I have said upon Hosea vi. 6, where I have commented upon the dignity and surpassing excellency of mercy.

Well does S. Bernard (*Serm.* 16 *in Cant.*) exclaim, "O Wisdom, with what art of healing, by wine and oil, dost Thou restore health to my soul! Thou art bravely sweet, and sweetly brave, brave *for* me, sweet *to* me. Thy name is oil poured forth, not wine. For I would not that Thou shouldst enter into judgment with Thy servant. It is oil, because thou crownest me with mercy and loving kindness. It is indeed oil; for oil floats at the top of all liquids with which it is mingled: and thus it is a lively figure of that Name which is above every name."

For I came not to call the just but sinners. So it is in the Vulgate

The Greek adds, εἰς μετανοίαν, *to repentance*. So too S. Luke, and the Arabic Version. This must be either expressed or understood. For Christ also called Nathanael, who was a just man. Also He called the Blessed Virgin, S. John, and Elizabeth, who were saints, to still greater sanctity and perfection.

Hilary, Jerome, Bede, &c., take the words differently, *I came not to call the righteous*, that is, those who proudly, but falsely esteem and boast themselves to be righteous, when they are in very truth sinners and hypocrites, such as ye are, O ye Pharisees.

Then came to him the disciples of John, &c. *Then*, signifies that it was shortly afterwards. The Pharisees being, therefore, upon just grounds, refuted by Christ, here frame another accusation against Him. They suborn the disciples of John, that by the occasion of fasting, practised by them in common with themselves, they might bring it as a charge against Christ, that neither He, nor His disciples fasted. Now this particular fast to which they refer was not prescribed by the Law, for Christ and His disciples observed the fasts as well as all the other requirements of the Law: but it was a fast, either appointed by the Jewish doctors, or else voluntarily taken up by their disciples at the exhortation of the doctors. Wherefore S. Luke relates that they said, *Why do the disciples of John fast oft, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees, but Thine eat and drink?* It is as much as to say, "Thou wishest to be our Reformer, and a master of perfection: Why then do we fast, when Thou and Thine lead a genial life?" S. Mark speaks of the disciples of John, in connection with those of the Pharisees. This was because the Pharisees instigated John's disciples to propose this question to Christ. And this is the reason why S. Matthew in this place makes mention only of John's disciples. They therefore press Christ with the authority of John the Baptist, which was very great among the Jews, but they do it in an unwarrantable and presumptuous manner. "This was a haughty interrogation," says the *Interlinear*, "and full of Pharisaic pride." "Therefore," says S. Jerome, "John's disciples

are to be blamed, because of their boasting about their fasting, as because of their uniting themselves to the Pharisees whom John had condemned; also because they were calumniating Him of whom John had preached." Moreover, the disciples of John said these things out of zeal for their master, and out of envy of Christ, preferring John to Him. This may be gathered from S. John iii. 26. We may perceive a like jealousy in certain good men, even now, who busy themselves in extolling their own founder or patron above everybody else: but in this they are carnal and childish, and betray their own secret vanity and arrogance. For in thus extolling their master above others, they are really seeking to exalt themselves. Such were the Corinthians, who said, "I am of Paul, I of Cephas." Such the Apostle sharply rebukes, saying, "When there is envy and contention among you, are ye not carnal and walk as men?" (1 Cor. iii. 3.)

And Jesus saith unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber, &c. The Bridegroom is Christ, because He hath betrothed human nature, and by it the Church, unto Himself, in the Incarnation, and hath united them unto Himself by a perpetual bond of marriage. This marriage Christ hath begun by grace on earth (Matt. xxii. 2), but He will consummate it in glory with His elect in heaven, where there shall be celebrated the endless marriage-feast of the Lamb (Apoc. xix. 7). Hence John the Baptist calls himself the friend of the Bridegroom (John iii. 29). And Christ's disciples, hearing this, knew that He was the Bridegroom.

Children of the bridechamber. So it is in the Greek. But the Latin Vulgate has, *sons of the bridegroom*. The meaning of *children of the bridechamber*, is that they rejoice in the Bridegroom's marriage, and are accounted His familiar friends, and are admitted to His chamber and hear His secret counsels. By a similar Hebraism, they are called sons of obedience, who love obedience; sons of pride, who delight in pride.

Mourn, by catachresis, for *fast*, because in mourning, men fast, and fasting makes men sad; just as, on the contrary, food and

wine make men jovial and cheerful. The meaning is, "It is not wonderful that My disciples do not mourn and fast whilst they are enjoying Me and My nuptials. For at a wedding, modest banquets are becoming, fasting is unbecoming. But the sons of the Servant —that is, My servant John Baptist, who leads an austere life to bring men to repentance, and imposes the burdensome law of Moses upon his followers because it is still binding—grief and fasting, I say, become them; for they, by means of sorrow and austere deeds of penance, are preparing the way for sinners to the joyful marriage supper of the Bridegroom, Christ. But Christ shall die, and be taken from them, and then shall His disciples mourn and fast. He alludes to the ancient custom of mourning for the dead, accompanied by fasting. Thus the Hebrews mourned for Saul, fasting seven days.

Christ here intimates that novices in the faith and in religious orders must be gently and blandly treated, as being tender and but children in spirit, until they become matured in virtue, lest they should despair, or forsake the path of virtue on which they have entered. Thus S. Pachomius, who received the rule of his Order from an angel, directed novices to be instructed in it for three years, even as Christ fed His Apostles with milk, and instructed them in His school for three years.

We are here reminded of that ancient good Abbot, who used to receive his guests to dine before the canonical hour for refection. When asked the reason, he said, "Fasting, my brethren, is always with me, but since I am about to send you away, I cannot have you with me always. Since, therefore, I receive Christ in you, I ought to refresh you; and when I shall have set you on your way, I shall be able, by myself, to make up for deferring my fasting." So Cassian and Sulpitius relate.

Moreover, after Christ's death, the Apostles often fasted, and suffered from hunger and thirst, as S. Paul relates at length, 2 Cor. xi. So in the Life of S. Peter we read that he did severe penance, and ate only bread with olives.

Hence, also, in the Eastern Church, says S. Epiphanius (*Hæres.*

75), Christians fast on Wednesdays and Fridays. So they still do in Greece, Poland, and Holland. In other parts of the Western Church they abstain from flesh on Fridays and Saturdays. These customs arose because on Wednesday the Bridegroom was betrayed to the Jews by Judas, on Friday He was crucified, and on Saturday He lay in the tomb. Epiphanius adds that formerly on fasting days Christians ate nothing but bread and salt, with water, and that this was enjoined by a decree of the Apostles.

Tropologically, S. Jerome says, "When Christ the Bridegroom departed from us on account of sins, then especially must grief and fasting be undergone."

But SS. Hilary and Ambrose say, we have Christ the Bridegroom with us, and we continually feed on His Body in the Eucharist. But those to whom the Bridegroom is not present, present, that is, by grace, such as those who are living in deadly sin, keep a perpetual fast, because they lack the Bread of Life. S. Ambrose, explaining the words of Christ, *The Bridegroom shall be taken away from them*, says, "No one can take Christ from thee, unless thou takest thyself away from Him."

No man putteth a piece of new cloth, &c. Note 1, for *piece of cloth*, the Greek has ἐπιβλήμα, *an addition*, *a patch*. S. Augustine and Tertullian call it *plagula*. Others call it a little rag, what is called in Italian, *un pezzo*. Whence S. Francis desired his Brothers to wear patched garments, like paupers. For thus we see beggars wearing clothes made of many and divers-coloured patches, which you might reckon up to the number of a hundred. Hence they are called *centos*.

Of new, ἄγναφος, *cloth*, that is, *unfulled, uncombed, uncarded cloth*—cloth such as is brought by the weavers to be prepared and dyed. S. Luke has, *commissuram a novo vestimento*, "a patch off a new garment." For such is a new and rough rag. Whence the Italians call clothes, *rags*.

That which is put in to fill it up. The Greek and the Vulgate have, *its plenitude;* by which Christ means, *its integrity*. For if you sew a piece of new cloth on to an old garment, you will take

away its integrity, so that it will no longer seem one garment but two, partly old, partly new.

Note 2, the meaning of the parable is this: If an ancient garment be torn, it should be mended with the like old cloth, not with new. For if the new patch be sewed on to the old cloth, the garment is no longer whole and homogeneous, but multiform and heterogeneous, and so deformed and spoilt.

And the rent is made worse, that is, than it was before, when the garment was torn; *worse*, because of the division of the old parts from the other old parts, by the intervention of *the new patch*. Therefore *the rent is made worse*, because what has been added to it to mend it, tears it still more. Thus it is again cut out, and so there is a still greater rent.

In a similar way, Cicero said of Julius Cæsar, when he wished to decorate certain unworthy persons with Senatorial dignity, "Them he did not adorn, but brought disgrace upon the honours themselves."

Note 3, the parable is connected with the matter in hand, as follows: "As no one sews a new patch on an old garment, but attaches new to new, old to old, so I, who am the most prudent Physician of souls, perceiving the ancient and ingrained habits of My disciples, as it were an old garment, and their infirmity as old bottles, do not, as yet, impose upon them hard and rigid penances and fasts, since they are not prescribed by the Law, but are voluntary, lest also the fruit of My teaching should be lost to them, and they, being moved to despair, should forsake Me and My teaching: but I am waiting until they shall be renewed by the Heavenly Spirit, whom I will send down at Pentecost, that, oldness and weakness being laid aside, they may undertake new austerities and new fasts. And this they shall do, not by compulsion, or from fear of punishment, like the Jews, but voluntarily, and out of love. For the New Law of Christ is one of liberty and love, as the Old Law was one of fear and servitude." That the Apostles, after Pentecost, kept frequent fasts, is plain from Acts xiii. 2, 3; 2 Cor. xi. 27; Acts xxvii. 9, &c. So Euthymius, Theophylact, Maldonatus, Jansen,

and others explain this passage. Less appositely Tertullian, (*lib. de Orat.* c. 1, and lib. 3 *contra Marc.* c. 15) by old garments and old skins understands the Old Law, by the rough and new patch the New Law, or the Gospel. For the New Law hath reformed the Old, and as it were made it new. For precisely and adequately, by the old garment and the new, the Apostles are meant, who as yet, from their old habit of eating and living freely, were old, but were to be renewed at Pentecost by the spirit of temperance and austerity.

Neither do men put new wine, &c. Christ shows by a threefold similitude, that His disciples must not fast when He was present. 1. By the parable of the Spouse and the wedding. 2. Of the old and new garment. 3. Of the new wine, and the old bottles of skin. The sense is this: "As new wine, or must, by the violence of its fermenting spirit, and its heat, bursts the old skins, because they are worn and weak, and so there is a double loss, both of wine and skins; therefore new wine must be poured into new skins, that, being strong, they may be able to bear the force of the must: so in like manner, new austerities and fasts must not be imposed as yet upon My disciples, lest their spirits should be broken, and they depart from Me. But I wait for the coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost."

Truly, saith Horace, "Unless the vessel be clean, it will taint whatever you pour into it." So also a pure and perfect life agrees not except with a mind cleansed from vices, pure and renewed. Otherwise both the austerity and the mind itself are full of sourness and bitterness.

An old proverb is similar to this parable, "A new sieve, a new peg," which Nonias quotes from Varro's *Eumenides*, where Zeno is said to have first hung a new sect upon a new peg, because Zeno founded at Athens a new sect of the Stoics, which he did by new reasonings and paradoxes. There is also the proverb, "A new swallow, a new spring." Whence the Rhodians, on the testimony of Theognis, by yearly public proclamation, invite the swallows in the spring-time, "Come, come, O swallow, and bring us a good season and a prosperous year."

While he spake these things, &c. *A ruler*, namely, of the synagogue, as Luke adds, who presided over the synagogue in Capernaum. For these things took place by the shore of the sea of Galilee, near Capernaum, as is plain from Mark v. 21, 22. Mark speaks of him as one of the rulers of the synagogue, for there were several rulers of the same synagogue, who taught and guided the people who assembled in it, in the same way that priests do now in churches. His name was Jairus, as Mark records. This is the same as the Hebrew *Jair*, meaning, *that which shall be resplendent*, or *shall give light*, from the root אור *or*, "he hath shone." For Jairus, as the ruler of the synagogue, illuminated the people, and taught the Law.

Worshipped him, that is, *fell at his feet*, as Mark and Luke have it.

My daughter, twelve years old, as Luke says, *is even now dead, but come*. Matthew, studying brevity, relates in substance what was done, rather than the exact historical sequence. For, as is plain from Mark and Luke, the child was not yet dead when her father first came to Christ and said, *Come and lay thine hand upon her, and she shall live*. As Christ and Jairus were going together, some one ran, and told Jairus that his daughter was dead, and that, the case being now desperate, he should come away from Christ. Then Christ, as it would seem, confirms his wavering faith, and Jairus hopefully leads Him to his house, and then, either by implication, or else in express words, asks Him to raise his daughter from death, as Matthew here relates.

S. Chrysostom and Theophylact explain differently. *She is dead, i.e.*, she is near death, for in this way those who are wretched, are wont to exaggerate their miseries, that they may more easily obtain the aid for which they seek. S. Austin (lib. 2 *de Consens. Evang.* c. 28), adds, that the father by reckoning the time which his journey had taken, might suppose that she, whom he had left in her last agony, was now dead.

But come, lay thine hand. Jairus had seen, or heard of many sick who had been healed at Capernaum by the laying on

of hands; and he hoped that Christ would do the same for his daughter. The faith of Jairus was less than that of the centurion, for he believed that Christ, even when absent, could heal his servant by a word.

And Jesus arose. It is probable that Christ was sitting and teaching the multitude when He rose up at the request of Jairus. Observe the readiness and promptitude of Christ to succour the afflicted. Let Christians imitate Him in this. S. Chrysostom adds, that when Christ first went with Jairus, He proceeded somewhat slowly, and conversed for some time with the woman with the issue of blood, that in the meantime the girl might die, and that there might be a manifest proof of the resurrection.

Behold, a woman, &c. She was from Cæsarea, a place called Dan, afterwards Paneas. We learn this from Eusebius (*H. E.* 7. 14). S. Mark relates at greater length this history of the healing of the woman. It will therefore be more convenient to speak of it in the Commentary upon his Gospel (chap. v.).

And when Jesus came, &c. *Minstrels* were persons who, as S. Ambrose says (*in S. Luc. c.* 8. 52), were hired at funerals, to chant doleful ditties, by which they moved the relations and neighbours to sobbing and tears. There were women minstrels as well as men. Jeremiah speaks of the former (ix. 17), "Call for the mourning women, that they may come, and let them make haste, and take up a wailing for us, that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with water." This was not only a Jewish custom: it was also common among the Gentiles.

Minstrels. Gr. *flute-players.* Theophylact says, that the ancients at the funerals of men sounded with trumpets; but at the funerals of boys and virgins played upon flutes, as in this case of the daughter of Jairus. This was done, he says, in token of their virginity.

He said, Give place, &c. The girl was really dead, as is plain from verse 18. Christ, however, denied this, and said that she was asleep. 1. Because as S. Jerome says, to God and Himself, to whom all things live, she was not dead, and because she was to

be raised again at the Judgment Day. Wherefore the dead are continually called in the Scriptures, *those who sleep.* 2. And better, because this girl was not dead in the sense in which the multitude thought her dead, namely, altogether and absolutely dead, as though it were not possible for her to be recalled to life, when by the extraordinary providence of God that very thing was shortly about to be done. Thus she was not so much really dead, as sleeping for a little while. Thus too, when Lazarus was dead, Christ speaks of him as sleeping. (John xi. 11.) So Maldonatus, Jansen, and others explain. Moreover the soul of this deceased girl, like the souls of others whom Christ and His saints have raised from the dead, was not yet judged, or condemned to hell, or purgatory. But God's judgment was suspended, because it was His will to bring her back to life.

S. Chrysostom adds, Christ shows by this expression that it was as easy to Him to raise the dead, as to awake men out of sleep, and therefore we should not fear death, for when He comes nigh, it is no longer death but sleep.

And they laughed him to scorn, &c. Christ, says Chrysostom, permitted this, that the girl's death might be better attested, and so the greater the belief in Him when He did raise her from death.

But when the people were put forth, he went in, with, says S. Mark, *the parents of the child, and Peter, James, and John.* Christ put forth the crowd, because they were not worthy, says the *Interlinear*, to see that which they would not believe. S. Jerome says, they were unworthy to behold the mystery of the resurrection, who had derided Him who was about to raise. Christ teaches us when we are doing some great work, to avoid multitudes and tumult, which distract the mind, that we may give the full force of our mind to our work and to prayer.

Tropologically, S. Gregory says, "That the dead soul may arise, the multitude of worldly cares must be cast out of the heart."

Symbolically, the *Gloss* says, "When the scornful deriders have been rejected, Christ enters into the minds of the elect."

Anagogically, S. Hilary: "How few are the elect may be understood from the multitude being cast out."

Took her by the hand. That is, like a magistrate He laid His hand upon the corpse, as upon one who was guilty. He seizes it, and conquers it, and, as though it were a captive, He subjugates it to Himself. The Greek is ἐκράτησε, and the word denotes the efficacy of the power and empire of Christ. He held the hand of the dead body, as though ruling and commanding it, and so mightily operating upon it as to raise it from death unto life. For by His hand He raised the body from the earth, and recalled the soul into it from the unseen world, saying to it in Syriac, *Talitha cumi*—that is, *Maid, arise.* "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son giveth life to whom he will." (John v. 21.)

And the maid arose. Greek ἠγέρθη—*i.e.*, was roused up, and awoke. Christ raised her to life, as easily as if He were waking one who was asleep.

Mark adds, *And he commanded that something should be given her to eat.* This was that the resurrection might be seen to be real.

And the fame hereof . . . . into all that land—that is, into the whole of Galilee. All men spread abroad the news, and celebrated this resurrection of the maid by Christ, speaking of it as a new, unheard of, and Divine work. And in so doing they preached Christ, that He was a prophet—yea, the Messiah.

SS. Hilary, Ambrose, and Jerome say that these things are an allegory of the Church. The woman with the issue of blood, who received health and the salvation of her soul before the daughter of the chief of the synagogue, or the Jews, is the people of the Gentiles; for after the fulness of the Gentiles has entered into the Church, the Jews shall be converted, and saved at the end of the world. Whence the *Gloss* says, Jairus—*i.e.*, illuminating, or illuminated, is Moses, who, beholding the Lord about to come in the flesh, prays for his daughter—that is, the Synagogue, who, brought up by the Law and the Prophets, languishing in error, is dead in sins, but nevertheless is in the house—that is, in the

worship of God. And S. Jerome says, "Even until this day, the Synagogue lies dead, and they who seem to be teachers—the Jewish Rabbin—are flute-players and minstrels, singing a mournful chant; and the Jews are not a multitude of believers, but of people making a noise."

Tropologically, both the woman healed of the issue of blood, and Jairus' daughter raised from the dead, denote the sinful soul, which Christ raises from the death of sin to the life of grace; but first, the friends and minstrels must be driven out—that is, the depraved companions and the wicked spirits; for they soothe the soul with their ditties, and detain it in the death of sin. They make flattering suggestions. They chant that sin is not deadly, or that some indulgence must be granted to youth, that all may be atoned for by repentance when old, and so on. Thus Christ touches the soul. By His mighty power He takes her by the hand, gives her life, and raises her up from the deep of death to the summit of life. By-and-by she is bidden *to walk*, that is, do good works; and *to eat*, that is, to feed on the Eucharist, that it may strengthen and confirm her life.

Only the three chief Apostles are present, that it may be signified that Christ, by the Apostles and their successors, will raise sinners from death; and that this is the prime and chief power of the Apostles, concerning which Christ saith, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." (John xx. 23.)

Lastly, Christ is recorded to have raised three dead persons only to life—first, this maid of twelve years old, whom He raised immediately upon her decease. The second was the young man, the widow's son, whom He raised as he was being carried to the tomb. The third was Lazarus, whom He called out of his sepulchre, after he had lain there four days.

First, the young girl denotes those who from age—for young people are fervid and inexperienced—or from frailness, or from infirmity, fall into sin, but very soon, being touched by God, see their fall, and easily repent, and rise again. Secondly, the

young man denotes those who have fallen repeatedly into sin, and are verging upon a habit of sin. These are with more difficulty recalled to life. They need more powerful and efficacious grace. So it came to pass that Christ commanded the bearers of the young man to stand still. And touching the bier, He said in a commanding manner, *Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.* Thirdly, Lazarus denotes those who have grown old in sin. These are with great difficulty recalled. They need the most efficacious grace and vocation of God. And the symbol or indication of this, was Christ's groaning, weeping, and crying with a loud voice, *Lazarus, come forth.* Therefore Rabanus and others think that, symbolically, by the raising of the girl is meant the repentance of one who has only sinned in thought: by the young man, the repentance of those who have sinned in deed as well as in thought: by Lazarus, their repentance, who have contracted a habit and practice of sin. Lastly, Christ here teaches that secret and light sins are blotted out by secret repentance, and therefore the girl was raised in the house. But public sins need a public remedy, therefore he recalled the young man and Lazarus to life publicly, before multitudes.

And passing on from thence, i.e., from Jairus' house, *two blind men*, &c. These blind men had conceived the hope of recovering their sight from Christ from the many and great miracles which they had heard were done by Him. Therefore they said, *Have mercy upon us*, pity our blindness, which is the greatest misery, and restore to us the light of the sun. We believe that Thou art the Son of David, that is, the Messiah, to whom this healing of blindness and other diseases has been promised by the Prophets. (Is. xxxv. 5; lxi. 1.) For Messiah had been promised to David as his Son, that He should be sprung from his posterity. Wherefore Messiah was always called by the Jews, *the Son of David.* Therefore these men, whose bodily eyes were blind, had sharp-sighted minds, as a certain writer exclaims, "O that darkness brighter than any light: O those most piercing eyes of blindness!"

And when he was come into the house, &c. *The house*, that is to

say, His own, which Christ had hired at Capernaum, as I have said on chap. iv. 13. Christ did not answer the blind men as they cried unto Him in the way, and asked their sight. He put them off until He came into the house, 1. That He might prove them, and kindle their faith and desire of healing. 2. That He might teach the necessity of persevering in prayer. *Believe ye*, He says, *that I am able to do this?* He does not say, *that I am about to do it?* but, *that I am able to do it?* For faith is properly in the Omnipotence of God. This is why we say in the Creed, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." This faith then gave rise to hope, insomuch that these blind men conceived the hope that what Christ was *able* to do, that He *would* do. Away then with the faith of the Innovators, by which they believe, that their sins have been forgiven to themselves in particular, for the merits of Christ, and that they are justified, and sons of God. They believe, I say, in their own false imagination, by which they say that they most firmly believe it by Divine faith, when they only imagine it, and dream of it. For nothing can be believed, except what has been revealed by God. But it has not been revealed to thee, O Luther, that thou art justified (*justum*), therefore thou canst not *believe* it.

Then he touched their eyes, &c. Christ heals them by the touch of His hands, to manifest their saving power. "The confession of their mouth is requited by the touch of kindness," says the *Gloss*.

And Jesus straitly charged them. The Greek is, ἐνεβριμήσατο, the Vulgate *comminatus est:* which means literally, *He sharply and sternly threatened them.* He did this to show His strong dislike of ostentation in His miracles, and of vain glory, and to teach us to dislike it.

But they spread abroad his fame in all that country. These blind men did not offend against the strict charge of Christ by publishing His miracle, as Calvin would have it, for they persuaded themselves that Christ had done so, not by an absolute precept, but only out of modesty, for the reason I have given. And no wonder

that the blind men thought so, for the Fathers are persuaded that Christ spoke in this sense. Hear S. Chrysostom: "To another He says, *Declare the glory of God;* surely He teaches that they are to be rebuked, who wish to praise us for our own sakes, but not if they do so for the glory of God." And S. Jerome says, "The Lord, because of humility, avoiding the glory of boasting, gave this command; but they, in remembrance of His grace, were not able to keep silent about His kindness."

They brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. Gr. κωφὸν, which rather means *deaf* than *dumb*, but the word, says S. Jerome, is used indifferently, in both senses, in Scripture. For they who are deaf from their birth, are usually dumb; for they who cannot hear anything, are not able to learn sounds and words, so as to speak them. For we only learn what we hear. Wherefore Christ did not require faith from this man as He did from others. So S. Chrysostom, Theophylact.

Moreover, the word *dumb* is not to be referred to the devil, as Cajetan thinks, but to the man, as is clear from the Greek δαιμονιζόμενον. The Syriac translation makes this plain, *They offered unto him a dumb man, in whom was a demon.* This was a different demoniac from the one of whom Luke speaks (xi. 14), for of this latter Matthew speaks below (xii. 22). Here Christ fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah concerning Him (chap. xxxv.), "Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing."

And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake. From this it appears that the demon made this man deaf and dumb, who was not so naturally. He did this by hindering the use of his tongue and ears, so that, when he was cast out, the dumb man both spake and heard. How wonderful was the benignity and mercy of Christ by which He made whole a man who neither asked nor thought about it—yea, who was unable either to speak or think, for he was possessed by a devil—simply at the prayer of those who brought him. Verily, wheresoever there is greatest affliction, there are most nigh the mercy and help of Christ,

according to the words, "The abyss" of our misery, "calls to the abyss" of the Divine mercy. (Ps. xlii. 7.)

The multitudes marvelled, saying, &c. Neither Moses nor Elias, nor Isaiah, nor any other of the prophets, performed so many and so great miracles as Jesus did. Therefore He was greater than they, and so was the Messias, or Christ. They preferred Christ, says S. Chrysostom, to all others, because He quickly healed an infinite number of incurable diseases.

But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils. As among the angels, so also among the devils, some are lower, others higher in rank, and princes, viz., those of the higher orders who fell, who were of a grander nature; for that which was theirs naturally remained in the devils after their fall. Thus those who fell of the Seraphim, the Cherubim, and the Thrones are princes among the lower orders of the Dominions, the Principalities, and the Powers; and these again are princes over the inferior fallen orders of Virtues, Archangels, and Angels. Thus even among rebel soldiers there are standard-bearers, colonels, captains. For without these an army cannot be marshalled and governed. Lucifer is the prince of all the devils, as S. Michael is of all the angels, as I have said on Apoc. xii. Observe the different dispositions of the Pharisees and the multitude. The multitude, with artless candour, magnified the miracles of Christ as done by a Divine Person, even the Messiah. But the Pharisees were envious of Christ, and had indignation against Him, and said that He was a magician, and had a familiar demon, by whose magic art He did these wonderful things. This was the awful blasphemy which Christ refutes in chap xii. 25. But now, meekly bearing and despising their charges, He proceeds in His course of doing good, and confutes their blasphemies by fresh miracles.

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, &c. *Villages*, in the Vulgate, *castella*. *Castrum* is a place surrounded by walls, and is greater than a castle and less than a town, from whence the diminutive *castellum* means a *little town*. These *castella*, then, were torts, or small walled towns; and the meaning became

extended to signify villages without walls, which the Greeks call κώμας.

Christ visited not only inhabitants of cities, and those who were had in honour, but poor men and rustics dwelling in villages, and taught and healed them. Let priests and religious imitate this example of Christ. Desire not, O preacher, to hold forth in the magnificent cathedrals of great cities, for Christ taught in villages, as well as in cities, and thus He was the Catechist and Preacher, as well as the Redeemer, of the sparsely scattered and poor rustics.

But when he saw the multitudes, &c. *Had compassion*, the Greek is ἐσπλαγχνίσθη, that is, *pitied them from His inmost bowels*. This is the same word, as to its use, as the Hebrew רחם *rechem*, "bowels," and so, *mercifulness*.

As sheep having no shepherd. There is no animal so simple, careless, improvident, so exposed to be the prey of wolves and other wild beasts, and therefore so needing a keeper, as a sheep. Christ takes notice that the Scribes and priests, did not care for the good of the people, to lead them in the way of salvation. And so they were not pastors, but shearers of the sheep, who only cared for the milk and the fleece, that is, for what profit they could make out of the people. The Scribes, says S. Chrysostom, were not so much shepherds of the sheep as wolves, for in word they taught them false and perverse doctrines, and by their example they destroyed the souls of the simple ones, especially in that they called Christ a magician, and so alienated from Him the minds of those who were well disposed to Him.

The harvest truly is plenteous, &c. The harvest He calls the multitude of the people prepared to receive the Gospel, the seeds of which the Prophets had sown. Whence, as S. Austin saith, "the holy Apostles reaped among the Jews, but sowed among the Gentiles, because they delivered to them the first doctrines of the faith, as it were seed."

Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, &c., namely, that He would send you, O ye Apostles, and your co-adjutors and

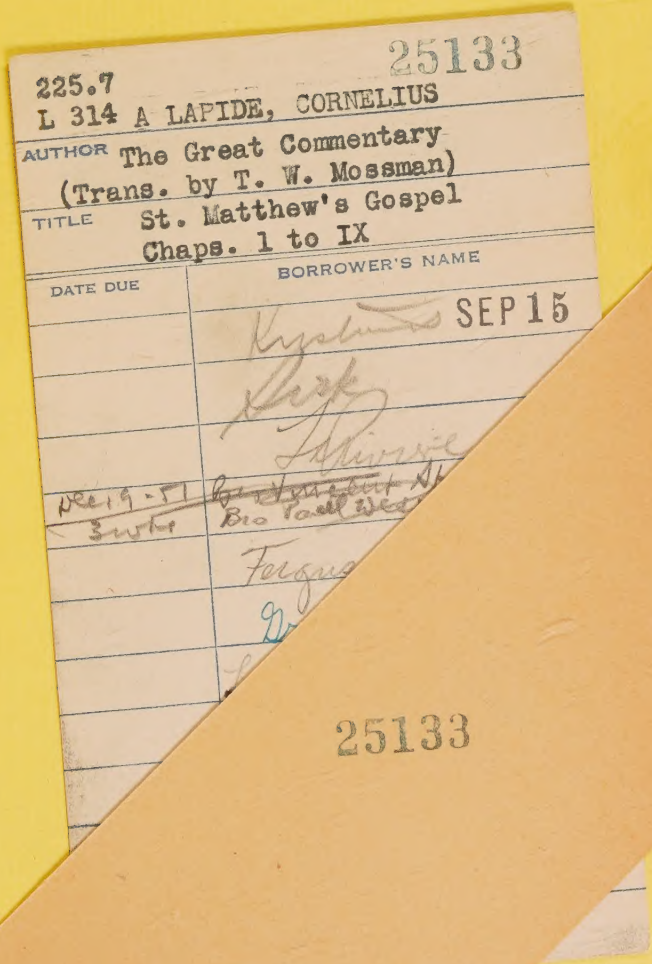
successors, and inspire them with the spirit of wisdom and zeal, assiduously to preach and to labour, that this so copious a harvest perish not.

The Lord of the harvest. Thus, tacitly, Christ calls Himself. As S. Chrysostom says, the Lord sent His Apostles to reap that which He Himself had sown by the Prophets. Remigius adds, The number of labourers was increased by the appointment of seventy-two other disciples.

Here ends the early manhood of Christ and His Acts from His Baptism and first Passover until His second Passover. That is to say, it is the history of one year and some months. This was the thirty-first year of Christ's age.

END OF VOL. I.

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.
Edinburgh & London



25133

225.7
L 314 A LAPIDE, CORNELIUS

AUTHOR The Great Commentary
(Trans. by T. W. Mossman)

TITLE St. Matthew's Gospel
Chaps. 1 to IX

DATE DUE	BORROWER'S NAME
	Kyshmas SEP 15
	Sisk
	[illegible]
Dec 19-51	~~[illegible]~~
3 wks	Bro Paul [illegible]
	Fergus
	[illegible]
	[illegible]

25133